

**LANCASTER, NEW YORK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of December 8, 2004**

Attendance:

James Keysa
Ronald Batt
Jean Brunea
Jan Pecqueur
Joseph Giallanza
William Harnack
Michael Meyer
Ann Karb
Jeff Simme
Jeff Stribing

HEARINGS:

A. A. J.'s Gelateria – 36 Central Avenue – (A. J. Peters and Mary Ann Warner) – Sign.

On December 3, Jim Keysa received a Petition for Certificate of Appropriateness for a backlit sign for this business. The proposed double-faced signage would be mounted perpendicular to the building next to the door and would say A. J.'s Gelateria & Café – Ice Cream, Coffees and Desserts. Measurements are 36 inches wide x 86 or 96 inches high. Upon receipt of the Petition, Jim immediately called and spoke with Mr. Peters and told him that no new backlit signs will be allowed in the District, that they should propose an alternative, and then the Board will entertain their Petition. He was informed of tonight's meeting and invited to attend.

When no one from the Gelateria appeared, Jim Keysa called to see if either Mr. Peters or Ms. Warner planned to be in attendance. They were unable to be reached directly by phone, but a message was left and subsequently we were informed that they would not be attending and it was decided to reschedule this hearing to the January 12 meeting.

Incidental to this signage question, Jim Keysa stated he had spoken with Mayor Cansdale, and that Bill Harnack had written a letter to the Mayor, indicating that the Sign Ordinance is still very necessary and citing a provision from the draft Village of Lancaster Central Business District Zoning Amendment of July 1999 (152-23.5.8 Signage, 152-23.5.8.1 General Provisions). It was mentioned that we had the proposal that Peter J. Smith Co. had done years ago and we had been following this. The Village Board apparently has not officially acted on this ordinance and Jim reiterated that it is imperative that we have a Sign Ordinance on the books. The Mayor asked if we could meet after the holidays and also indicated that he would like to see the pictures Bill Harnack has depicting both acceptable and unacceptable examples of existing signage in the Village.

Joseph Giallanza alluded to the considerable amount of work previously done by Dan Baccari that had never been adopted by the Village Board. Apparently the draft of the signage ordinance described above had been approved but never voted on by the Board. Bill Harnack suggested that this Sign Ordinance should be added to our By-Laws. Joe Giallanza proposed that someone who is qualified should prepare the Resolution for the Village Board to vote on, which is similar to what we did with the Tree Ordinance, and that we should have something available at the Building Inspector's office to hand out to people describing what type of signs are appropriate and what signs are not appropriate. It was decided that Jim will make the appropriate revisions based on the CBC draft of July 1999, and that Ann Karb will prepare the final copy that can be submitted to the Village Board for approval.

A motion was made by Bill Harnack that, if not previously done, we should officially incorporate the language regarding backlit signage from the latest revision of the CBC Zoning Amendment, July 1999, (Section 152-23.5.8) into the Historic District Commission By-Laws. Second: Joseph Giallanza. This motion was voted on and approved by board members and has now been added to the By-Laws.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes from the meeting of November 10, 2004, were distributed and read. There were no additions or corrections noted. A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Jean Brunea. Second by Jan Pecqueur. Minutes approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Broadway/Central Avenue.

It was noted that a number of the trees have been replaced but it was called to Jeff Stribing's attention that, in the area near Broadway and Burwell, there are still a number missing. The curb in front of Jim Keysa's office that was broken by a snowplow last year also has not been repaired. Jeff said this was the State's responsibility and he will notify them. There is also a stake that was left in the grass outside the sidewalk in front of Jim's house as well as a location medallion that is about eight or nine inches lower than the rest of the ground. These both present a hazard that could cause someone to fall. Jeff Stribing was also reminded about continuing issues in the municipal building parking lot. These include completion of striping as well as safety islands to be around the guy wires. This could present a liability issue for the Village and it would be to the Village Board's advantage to see that these light poles are made safer.

B. Tree Ordinance.

Jim Keysa advised Commission members that a Tree Ordinance had been passed by the Village Board. However, this pertains only to trees in the public right of way and leaves the final determination up to the Town Forester rather than a group of people. Trees on private property are not included in this ordinance. It was agreed that having a basic Tree Ordinance in place is important and it would be possible for us to make suggestions in the future for any changes that might be considered necessary.

C. Sign Ordinance.

This issue was addressed during the Hearings portion of tonight's meeting.

D. Rotary Park.

Jim Keysa had nothing new to report on this. The project appears to be awaiting the Village's obtaining some grant money. Rotary Club would like to use the park development as their 100th anniversary project in 2005 and would develop the front portion of the park on their own but would require additional funding to complete the project. Joe Giallanza suggested that, in lieu of grant money, Lancaster businesses might be approached to help finance this park in the business district.

Incidental to this discussion, Bill Harnack noted that when he was going through the CBD document prepared by Peter J. Smith Co. regarding signage, he came across a section on open spaces. In this document, the Rotary Park area was referred to as Central Park and described a continuous green belt proposed for development along the back of the Clark Street parking lot and which would follow the creek and terminate near the bridge. This green belt would increase paths of recreation in the area and make the park more psychologically appealing. Bill then noted that behind Rotary Park there are plans under way for construction of a new condominium project. A discussion ensued and Board members agreed that it would be a shame to lose this green space in the Village, but felt that the viability of the condominium project was questionable anyway.

E. Book Project.

At Bob Giza's suggestion, Jim Keysa went before the Town Board to request funding for our book project. The Town Board approved a line of \$7500 toward the project contingent upon our obtaining matching funds from the Village. Jim will prepare a proposal that can be submitted to the Village Board requesting these funds. He stated that he has spoken with Karl Kipp who has some ideas on how we can save money on the book regarding reproduction, etc. Bill Harnack felt we should have a more detailed concept of exactly the type of book we want to publish before we ask for funding. Jim Keysa described the proposed book as a coffee table-style book. He said he did contact the company that published the East Aurora book described in last month's minutes but they would prefer to publish a textbook-style book as opposed to what we have in mind. Joe Giallanza suggested that we go to a bookstore and find a similar type book and then approach a publisher to see how much it would cost to produce our book. Bill Harnack stated that he has a friend with experience in this field and he would be willing to consult him for advice on this project. Bill felt the main issues to be considered are the print run, hard cover vs. soft cover, approximate number of pages and quality of paper.

F. Review of Prior Hearings.

Jeff Simme updated the Board on the following:

- (1) Edward Church – 5558 Broadway. No response to letter.
- (2) Frosty's – 5478 Broadway. The owner of the ice cream store is out of town. Jeff stated he will follow with the landlord.
- (3) Linda McDonald – 71 Central Avenue. It was reported that the restaurant is going to be reopened.
- (4) Michael Stablewski – 5513 Broadway. A letter has been sent to him. We understand that he has been in touch with an architect concerning plans for the porch construction as requested by the Board.
- (5) Jack Bromwich – 5572 Broadway, front porch. No response to letter.
- (6) Ralph Mohr – 5622 Broadway. Nothing to report.
- (7) 81 Central. It was noted that quite a bit of work has been done on this property.
- (8) 87 Central – Kory Schuler, porch and gutters. Nothing to report.
- (9) Peter Gubala – 5608 Broadway, barn and dovecote. A letter has been sent to property owner.

G. Lancaster Presbyterian Church – Potter's House.

The issue of replacing ground floor windows in the Potter's House with glass blocks has been under discussion for several months. Jim Keysa advised board members that after conversations with Rick Lord of the SHPO office, he has prepared a letter to the church committee as follows:

"I brought the issue of replacing the double-hung windows at the Potter's House at the southeast corner of Broadway and Lake Avenue to the attention of New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Richard Lord responded indicating that the glass block replacement for any window is never approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at historic properties. SHPO would endorse my repair and storm suggestion, namely repairing the windows but not making them like new, and then having Lexan panels placed over the windows to stop the heat loss. This should be less expensive than using glass block windows.

In addition to damaging the historic appearance of the building, some other problems that would be created by the use of glass block windows would be (1) There would be no access from the windows in the case of fire. In speaking with Jeff Simme, the Building Inspector, he indicated that the installation of glass block windows would make the basement a fire trap and the congregation would be unable to use it for gatherings. (2) Ventilation would be eliminated. Even if the windows had a built-in venting system, they would not give proper ventilation. (3) Glass block windows cut down on natural lighting.

(4) The cost of basic repairs and covering the windows with Lexan panels should cost even less than the glass block windows. The Lancaster Historic District Commission will not approve the glass block window replacements but will accept the repair and storm alternative."

The Board members agreed with the content of the letter without further discussion. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Mayor Cansdale and to Jeff Simme.

NEW BUSINESS:

At tonight's meeting, Dr. Ron Batt advised the Board that, due to time constraints and personal commitments, he would be unable to continue as a member of the Lancaster Historic District Commission and would be terminating his position after tonight's meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- (A) Wednesday, January 12, 2005
- (B) Wednesday, February 9, 2005
- (C) Wednesday, March 9, 2005

Tonight's meeting was adjourned in memory of Iris M. Drzewiecki, who passed away on December 5. It was noted that she and her husband were instrumental in initiating the restoration of the Hull House project in Lancaster.