



City of Saugatuck
Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes August 3, 2023, 6:00 PM

PROPOSED

Saugatuck City Hall

102 Butler Street

Call to Order/Roll Call: Chair Straker called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Chairman Straker, Vice-Chairman Leo, Commission members: Cannarsa, Donahue, & Paterson.

Absent: Commission members Lewis.

Others Present: Deputy Clerk/DPW Admin. Assistant Williams.

Agenda Changes/Additions/Deletions: None.

Approval of Minutes for July 6, 2023:

*Motion by Cannarsa, second by Donahue, to approve the July 6, 2023, meeting minutes.
Upon voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.*

Public Comments: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

A. 333 Lucy St – Renovations to the enclosed front porch, removal of non-original sliding doors, installation of double-hung windows, installation of a porch side entry door, and replacement of front porch stairs. (Voice Vote)

The applicant proposes renovations to the enclosed front porch, including the removal of five (5) non-original sliding doors, installation of nine (9) double-hung windows, installation of a porch side entry door, and replacement of the front porch stairs.

The property is located in the Community Residential (R-1) zoning district. The lot is approximately 66 feet wide and 132 feet deep (8,712 square feet), and a single-family detached home exists on the site. Known as the Singapore House, the subject building is a contributing Italianate structure built in 1868.

A motion was made by Leo, second by Cannarsa to approve renovations to the structure at 333 Lucy Street, including the removal of five (5) non-original sliding doors, installation of nine (9) double-hung windows, installation of a side entry door, and replacement of the porch stairs, in accordance with the plans and details submitted within the application materials.

Commissioner Leo amended his motion to include the following:

- 1. Replacement window specification sheets for the proposed windows.*
- 2. Description of existing siding and the final proposed replacement siding.*

Following roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.

B. Waterfront Initial Assessment Report – Discussion and Feedback

Chair Straker said that he spoke with Zoning Administrator Cummins and Mayor Dean regarding the surveys that went out. He was surprised that they included things in the Historic District that, to his knowledge, they were not aware that there was a survey being conducted in some sort of intersection with the work of the HDC, and acknowledgement of the guidelines. He said that the report could come back after people weigh in and out of context with “I would love to see 1888 Colonial everywhere”. The Historic District guidelines don’t support things that might come out of that. Then it would be the HDC being the bad guys, when the Commission was not consulted on the language of the survey in the first place. He says that it is just sort of

an ask to maybe work a little closer together. That it was completely innocent, and he believes there was positive intent for that. The result of that was Zoning Administrator Cummins asking Planning Consultant David Jirousek to join them and give the Commission an overview of the work that is in progress.

Planning Consultant Jirousek said that they have produced an initial report concerning the Waterfront Regulation Assessment and the whole project is three phases. They are heading toward the end of the first phase. The initial phase is really studying the project area, and the regulatory regulations in the Master Plan. As a part of that, they prepared the first report, which includes a character assessment of the study area, a kind of a high-level redevelopment and development potential just so they can assess how many lots are likely to be developed or redeveloped. He reviewed the Master Plan as it relates to the recommendations for the downtown area and the waterfront. This report is the first look at the zoning code analysis. They made some observations on the zoning code and some comparisons between districts. In the next report, there will be a full assessment of the zoning code and a summary of the public input. In the summary of the public input, there were two public surveys. They received about 300 responses to both surveys. The first was a visual preference study. Jirousek said that what he attempted to do in that assessment was to pull a number of different types of architectural designs, different buildings, citing buildings of different scale and design. The idea there was to try to find the trends that were most desirable from those taking the survey. He has not yet crunched the numbers on the surveys, but thinks some clear trends are certainly becoming apparent in kind of a more traditional type of look of buildings rather than modern architecture. That will be a part of his report that will come out at the end of next week. There is also a general survey concerning general issues and priorities for the waterfront area. They had representatives of the Planning Commission participating in staff stations at various events and at City Hall and the Post Office just to be able to get people more aware of the projects. There were some exercises on those boards to give a taste of the surveys that are online. They had the QR code and the web link on those boards so that people would be referred to take the online survey. This is toward the end of the initial study session, so he thinks it is a great opportunity to hear the HDC's input and hopefully they have had the chance to page through the report. They are just trying to start the area and get an idea of folks' priority. From there, they will be making recommendations concerning zoning changes. Their initial recommendations will be offered to the Planning Commission after the August meeting. Once they get consensus of the Planning Commission on the direction that they are heading with this they will write the final zoning language. There will be an official public hearing that the Planning Commission level, and then they will move forward for City Council's review and approval. So again, it is like a three-step

process toward the end of the first step in getting to the point where he will begin to develop the recommendations for Zoning changes. He thinks it is a point to consider the Zoning ordinance and then the HDC requirements as well. He doesn't think that there is any intention to replicate any sort of any sort of material or requirements of the HDC. Jirousek says that they want to make sure that they aren't looking at building architecture in the historic aspects but that we are looking more at the placements of the buildings, the scale, setbacks, land use, and other improvements around the buildings themselves. When it gets to the specific elements that you review, as a committee, he thinks that there will be a little overlap here and there, which they will assess during the project.

Chair Straker says that this is where he has a huge issue with this. They have a whole section in their setup about architecture. In fact, in one of the sections you say about the Ship N' Shore that it has no significant architectural features, or preliminary response to the survey is more traditional structures versus modern. He says as he is one Commissioner, if he had been involved in that process with his HDC hat, he would have said, "Hey Zoning, I think you guys are about mass and scale and placement and setback. I don't think that you're about asking people what they like in terms of architecture, because you're going to get a mixed bag of subjectivity." Calling out the Ship N' Shore as one thing, like, that is pretty significant in the downtown district. He says that he would not categorize that as having no significant architectural features. He thinks that is really dangerous for them down the road. He applauds trying to engage everyone on the use of the waterfront and he thinks that is really smart but thinks this is going to be a hole to dig out of when everyone says what they like versus what fits.

Jirousek said that he would have to respectfully disagree with Chair Straker's statement. In Zoning, you can look at building forms and in general elements that have to do with architecture, but they do not get to the details that you address during your meetings. Zoning Codes, especially form-based zoning, does focus on the siting of buildings, but it also has to do with minimum and maximum heights, minimum and maximum width the building as it relates to the width of a lot, the frontage and façade of buildings in the terms of the types of entryways and where the entryways are located and the transparency of window front facing buildings.

Chair Straker said that they will have to disagree on that. He agrees with everything about massing and setback, window placement and all of those things. He said that if he has to go to every Zoning meeting and weigh in on that decision in a Historic District based on guidelines, he thinks that their opinion on the materiality and the architecture, whether a modern building fits in a historic setting is the HDC's decision, not Zoning. It has nothing to do with aesthetics, it has everything to do with the massing. The HDC always defers to Zoning and Planning on those things that are not in their purview. He thinks that the takeaway is to please

hear their concern as they continue the project. He thinks living in a subjective land and the public without a home base of what they are trying to accomplish or muddying it with aesthetics is a dangerous route for what they need to do.

Jirousek finished up by saying that they develop the recommendations and don't know how deep they would get into architecture, if at all, it may be a part of it and it may not. The survey results may be very applicable to the HDC's work and decision making as part of a future building review as well. He thinks it would be very valuable for the HDC to review the results of the surveys, and maybe those are considerations that are more at the HDC level than the Planning Commission's level. He agrees that they need to make sure that they are recognizing the roles of HDC and the Planning Commissions roles and responsibilities and what type of what portion of site planning and building each board and committee are reviewing. They can be very conscious of that and would love to continue this coordination meeting over the next two months.

Administrative Approvals & Updates:

Director of Planning, Zoning and Project Management Cummins gave an update regarding administrative approval for the following:

- A. 647 Butler – Rear Yard Patio
- B. 790 Lake – Rear Yard Deck
- C. 109 Butler – Sign
- D. 245 Spear – Patios
- E. 133 Butler - Sign

Communication: None.

Public Comment: None.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Paterson: He had one comment, that he supports exactly what Chair Straker said regarding the Waterfront Overview. And if somebody comes and wants to demo the river deli, we're the ones that make that decision and recommendation, regardless of setbacks and everything else. And that's, that's the train that we're going to be running into here, eventually. And, our recommendations have power, like you're recognizing, if somebody wants to put a three-floor structure where the Worm Shop was, that violates our charter on our Historic District guidelines.

Chair Straker: Wanted to announce that the HDC has a new commissioner coming onboard, Laura Godfrey. She is an HR professional and lives on Francis St. He said that she is well suited to join them and should be attending the next meeting.

Adjourn:

Motion by Cannarsa, second by Donahue to adjourn. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Chair Straker adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Sara Williams,

Deputy Clerk