



City of Saugatuck
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes June 6, 2024, 6:00 PM
Saugatuck City Hall
102 Butler St

Call to Order/Roll Call: Chair Straker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Straker, Commission members: Cannarsa, Donahue, Gardner, Godfrey, & Paterson.

Absent: None.

Others Present: Interim City Manager & Director of Planning, Zoning, and Project Management Cummins, Deputy Clerk Williams.

Agenda Changes/Additions/Deletions: None.

Approval of Minutes for May 2, 2024, Meeting:

Motion by Cannarsa, second by Godfrey, to approve the minutes for the May 2, 2024, meeting minutes. Upon voice vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes for May 7, 2024, Special Meeting:

Motion by Cannarsa, second by Donahue, to approve the minutes for the May 7, 2024, Special meeting minutes. Upon voice vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

- Nancy Kimble (530 Spear St) – She is a member of the Saugatuck DPW committee, as well as a board member for Friends of the Blue Star Trail and is very familiar with the project. Kimble advocates for modification of the pallet sign and installation of traffic and pedestrian signals.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

A. Lake Street/Blue Star Highway Intersection – Shift pallet sign (5 ft), installation of traffic and pedestrian signals, and construction of a multi-model pathway extension:

The City of Saugatuck requests Historic District Commission approval to move the City gateway sign approximately five feet, landscape the surrounding area, install new traffic signals, install new pedestal-mounted signal displays, and construct a pathway extension at the intersection of Lake Street and Blue Star Highway. The intersection and project fall within the Historic District.

A permit shall be obtained before any work affecting the exterior appearance of a resource is performed within the Historic District (§ 152.03).

The Commission went into deliberation with Gardner questioning whether the traffic lights should be in the Historic Districts approval process. He believes that it is a City Council decision to make about what the appropriate law with engineering consultants, which they have there. He is comfortable with recommendation on the pallet sign being moved to accommodate the trail, but he doesn't think it is within the purview of the Historic District Commission to make a decision or recommendation on traffic lights.

Godfrey wanted to clarify in what direction the pallet sign would be moved, and Zoning Administrator Cummins confirmed that it would be moving five feet back, away from Blue Star Highway. Godfrey stated that she had no issues with that and that she supports the effort with no further questions.

Donahue had no questions but said that he is thrilled that they are keeping everything with the pallet sign and that there will be a traffic signal installed because the summer traffic is terrible.

Paterson questioned if they would be using the same infrastructure as before with the pallet sign and if the footprint for the banners would be the same size and specification as used previously. Cummins assured the Commission that the sign and infrastructures would remain the same and that the area to hang the banners for events would be the same dimensions.

Cannarsa said that it is clear why the sign is in front of the Commission but still is not clear why the traffic signal is included and why they would look at that. Cummins explained that in the local Historic District ordinance, it very broadly says one or more publicly or privately owned historic or non-historic building structures, and the pallet sign and traffic poles would be considered a structure. He believes that there are features within the Historic District's boundaries such as structures, sites, and object features. The Historic District Commission would not have the ultimate authority to decide if a traffic signal is installed, but it is a piece of the approval process. He explained that if the Historic District Commission approves it tonight, City Council will be the determining factor of whether they want to approve funding for it to place a traffic signal at that intersection. Cummins stressed to the Commission that he cannot move this forward to Council, if the Historic District Commission says that it doesn't meet their guidelines in some way. He thinks that there are safety considerations and that is why the City is making the request to have the traffic signal installed. Cannarsa said that he didn't have any further questions, he just wanted clarity on their responsibility as far as the safety aspect of the placement of things because he cannot weigh in on that.

Chair Straker thinks that there is a huge difference between Historic District ordinances that are a part of zoning and planning, versus guidelines, which is what they use. He is hard pressed to find anything in their guidelines other than mass, scale, and streetscape that would take them down any path of traffic lights on Blue Star Highway or a sidewalk pedestrian thing. He says that the motion needs to either approve the plan as submitted or they need to clarify that they are approving the sign against their guidelines with the rest of it as a ride along approval. Cummins says that there are two layers here and that they've touched on this during the playground review. There is their ordinance that refers to your specific guidelines that speak to certain things and then there are situation when your guidelines don't speak to certain things, but the ordinance still requires that you look at other factors outside of the guidelines that would include the historical or architectural significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area. Compatibility, the exterior, the feature and space around it impacts the structure and space around as it relates to building real character and other factors the Commission considers pertinent. That is what the City Planner, David Jirousek evaluated for you and noting that, there is not specific on point guidelines, but there are general ordinance requirements that you still have to take into consideration like safety and accessibility.

Gardner thinks that they should be focused on the historical asset such as the sign. He is comfortable with the sign movement to accommodate this construction of the path. He is not comfortable with the Commission taking a position on the installation of the traffic lights, which are going to end up being whatever the City seems appropriate. This is a concept for the light and is not the final decision and has not been completed to decide. Gardner says that generally, their guidelines don't give us purview over this. His position even on the construction of the multi-modal pathway extension is that they can decide on the sign but everything else is outside of their purview. He says that he isn't criticizing the commission, he is just not sure why it is in front of the Historic District at all. Cummins questioned why he thinks that the Historic District Commission ordinance doesn't apply to those features. Gardner stated that he doesn't think they are necessary for their approval. Cummins explained that with their elements of the entire project, they are within the Historic District boundaries, their objects, their features, their structures all fall within the Historic Districts. He compared it to the trash receptacle placement and recycling receptacles that they brought to the commission because it was a new object within the district and whether they are actually purchased, it's staff and certainly a council decision at some point. You still have to view it through the lens of your guidelines and your ordinance requirements and still sign off. Cummins continued to explain that is not that they HDC would get the final say or that it may not be constructed in the end, but the Commission's approval is necessary to construct this permit from a staff perspective. Gardner disagreed and said that he just doesn't see how this comes in the purview of the commission and is concerned about how the public will perceive this.

Chair Straker explained to the Commission that they didn't have to do the motion exactly as it was written. He thought that there was one change that could be made to put their energy towards the sign but acknowledge the rest of the project. Cummins disagreed with Straker and said he thinks that the Commission needs to decide to approve the plan as it was the staff's recommendation. He said that unless the Commission can articulate in what way if they aren't going to approve the plan and why they believe that it is considered a resource and does not fall within the purview of the HDC. Gardner reiterated that his argument remained

Paterson brought up the 5G tower that the Commission went through, and he thinks that this is no different. He said if that timer was in front of the Saugatuck sign, they would have had an issue with it, and that means they do have some level of quasi authority on its location. Cannarsa agreed and said that the cell tower is the structure, and they looked at mass, scale, and streetscape. Gardner emphasized that this is a concept and not the final plan.

Cummins said that the City Council approved the plans contingent upon the rendering that Fleis & VandenBrink provided, the plans that are in their packet, show where the location of the signals are going to be and instructed the Commission that if they want to see spec sheets in the end or something related to the final product, make a condition on that similar to other projects where you want to see the final spec sheets.

Gardner continued to disagree and said that was not the point he was making. Cummins asked for clarity so he could understand. Gardner said that he just doesn't understand or see where the way that this is written with the installation of traffic and pedestrian signals and construction of a multimodal pathway extension is in their purview. He thinks that the ordinance is very general, the broad scope, and says that's narrower to make sure they are within scope, which would be the approval of moving the sign 4.8 feet to accommodate similar to what Chair Straker said. He doesn't know if this is going to be the final plan for the traffic lights, and it has not been decided by City Council, as it is just a concept.

Cummins said that City Council approved moving forward with a plan that is consistent with the rendering that is in the packet. That is exactly what they are bringing to you today to approve. He explained that if the plan changes, then they would have to return to HDC. They are asking for your approval of the rendering that is in the packet related to these traffic signals and the placement that is on these plans, which is what the City Council approved moving forward with and these are the plans they are moving forward with. Cummins said that Gardner is correct, that once plans are specs, as far as going out for bids, and they come back to the City Council with bids and if they don't like the signal and want to swap it out with something else, or they decide it is too costly, then they have to back it off and do something different there absolutely. The Council can say no at that point and change the plans. If they do, then they will certainly return to the Historic District Commission if there is a deviation from the approved plans.

Straker thinks that the cell tower is a great example of why things like this need to be a part of the HDC's purview because of where it impacts the streetscape. He agreed that it is an ordinance, and it is why it's in there and thinks that it does no harm as being part of the motion. He says that he also understands that it is Blue Star Highway and if someone came back and said that they wanted to put a lighted archway across Blue Star that had a dual purpose as a traffic signal, The Commission would have a point of view on that, which is not what is being asked. Straker thinks that this is pretty straightforward infrastructure and why he feels that it does no harm.

Cummins thinks that it is similar to the traffic signal that is at the intersection outside of City Hall and says that if they were doing something dramatically different structures like this, the Commission might have a concern, but this happens to be at a different intersection. He says that it is a signal nonetheless, that would be in their purview to review.

Straker wanted to think about the reverse side of this as they can say that they don't have purview over that, he gets what they are saying it is kind of to the letter of the law, they do have purview and they need to say that. On the flip side of it, they get upset when they are not

included in something that could change the streetscape and told the Commission that they cannot have it both ways. He sees no harm that it is in there and said that he doesn't think that they would ever overrule a utility that Council says after many studies is the right thing to do nor something that the Commission would do.

Motion by Godfrey, second by Cannarsa, to approve the shifting of the City gateway sign 4.8 feet, landscaping of the surrounding area, installation of new traffic signals and new pedestal-mounted signal displays and extend the pathway at the intersection of Lake Street and Blue Star Highway in accordance with the plans and details submitted within the application materials. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 5-1.

Yeas: Cannarsa, Donahue, Godfrey, Paterson, Straker

Nays: Gardner

B. 120 Mary – Renovation of the principal dwelling (including a fireplace) conversion of an accessory building into a pool house, and installation of a pool and hot tub:

The applicant proposes a comprehensive project at 120 Mary Street, including the renovation of the principal dwelling (including a fireplace), conversion of an accessory building into a pool house, and installation of a pool and hot tub. Landscape improvements are also proposed as part of the project.

The property is located in the City Center Transitional Residential District R-4 zoning district. The building is a contributing structure known as the Pierce Abby House, which was built in 1864. The overall plan is for the dwelling and accessory building at 120 Mary to be incorporated into the Wickwood Inn facility. While zoning issues remain outstanding, they do not preclude consideration and review of improvement projects on the subject property.

The principal dwelling is proposed to be improved with several new windows and shutters, and a fireplace will be constructed. A rear entry and stairs are proposed for the north side. The accessory building is proposed to have new windows and entry doors.

Since the April HDC meeting, the following changes have been included in the revised plans:

- Façade front door and front porch to remain.
- South-facing garage doors on the pool house to remain

The following details have been provided for review:

- Column base specification (Tuscan)
- Column and column cover specifications (round tapered plain, round tapered fluted, round non-taped plain, square non-tapered plain, square tapered plain, round non-tapered twist, square non-tapered fluted, round non-tapered segmented, square non-tapered panel, round belly, round tapered Greek Doric, round tapered fluted Greek Doric)
- Raised panel shutters with colonial trim
- Shutter hinges
- Shutter stays
- Anderson double-hung full-frame window specifications

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Chair Straker wanted to acknowledge that he met with the owner just to listen to what their proposed intent was and give feedback on what he thought the Commission would be looking for. He said that a lot was addressed during the presentation, but he did want to acknowledge that he did have a conversation with them. The Commission continued to deliberate.

Motion by Godfrey, second by Paterson to approve the application for 120 Mary Street with the following recommendations:

- The installation of the shutters will only be on the top story windows where the framing exists.*
- The square non-tapered plain columns will replace the renderings of the round columns on both the front door and the pergola.*
- The fireplace chimney will mimic the brick on the rest of the building and will be as limited as possible.*
- The windows be double hung one (1) over one (1) on second story and three (3) over one (1) double hung below on the first story where the windows are being asked to be replaced.*
- The shutters covering the bathroom window will be blacked out and the shutters removed.*
- Replace front door with wood, six panel, non-operative door with a light on each side of the door panel below as rendered. Needs spec sheet.*
- The garage will maintain the existing fabric and the doors will be rehabilitated as rendered. The windows that are being added to the garage are one (1) over (1) double hung. The door shall be a four (4) paneled wood door and the French doors should look like full light six (6) panel French doors as rendered.*
- The doors on the back of the house use simulated divided light, three (3) by five (5).*
- All windows are simulated divided light or true divided light.*

Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

C. 215 Butler – Replace the front entry door and a screening fence along the side deck area:

The applicant requests approval to replace the front entry door and a screening fence along the side deck area.

The property at 215 Butler is located in the City Center C-1 zoning district and the Historic District. The Italianate building was constructed in 1885 and is known as the Metzaur Building. It is a contributing resource.

The aging door has sustained continual damage and is intended to be replaced. The ornamental elements and lattice of the existing screen fence are to be removed and completely re-sided/wrapped with a cedar product.

When the Commission began their deliberation, Cannarsa noted that the applicant mentioned the project to him as he walked by and he gave his professional opinion on the project, not his opinion as a HDC Commissioner. The Commission continued to deliberate.

Motion by Donahue, second by Gardner to approve the replacement of the front door in a style consistent with the existing door and to modify the screening fence in accordance with the plans and details submitted. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

D. 202 Butler – Expanded outdoor seating areas on the sidewalks along Butler and Mason Streets:

The applicant requests Historic District Commission approval for expanded outdoor seating areas on the sidewalks along Butler and Mason Streets.

The property at 202 Butler is located in the City Center C-1 zoning district and the Historic District. The building was constructed in 1864 and is known as the Union Hotel. It is a contributing resource. Special land use approval will also be required.

The applicant provided a site plan and stated that, similar to previous seasons, there would be 15 tables and 45 seats at most. Images of black metal tables and chairs from a past season were provided, and some tables had striped umbrellas.

Motion by Donahue, second by Cannarsa, to approve the outdoor dining areas in accordance with plans materials, and details submitted with the application for 202 Butler Street. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

E. Resolution in Support of House Bill 5430 for the Expansion of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Tax Credits Established under Public Act 343 of 2020:

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) is working to expand the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HTC) that was passed in 2020.

Gov. John Engler signed the first Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HTC) into law in 1999 after years of advocacy by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN). The 25% credit was integral to restoration projects from Detroit to Menominee. Phased out in 2011 by Gov. Rick Snyder, the program had leveraged \$71 M in credits to generate \$1.46 B of investment in Michigan projects. The tax credit was reinstated in 2020. However, it had a cap of \$5M, limiting the potential impact on our local communities.

Earlier this year, Rep. Joey Andrews introduced House Bill 5430 to expand the cap for the HTC to \$100M. The HTC can impact every community, large and small, across our state. We are working to educate our legislators on the need for this expansion. Resolutions in support of the historic tax credits played a key role in reinstating the credit in 2020, so the MHPN is asking local governments and Historic District Commissions to consider passing a resolution of support for HB 5430.

Motion by Paterson, second by Gardner, to support the resolution in support of House Bill 5430 for the expansion of Michigan State Historic Preservation tax credits established under Public Act 343 of 2020. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

F. Reschedule July 4th Meeting:

Motion by Gardner, second by Godfrey to move the July 4th meeting to Wednesday, July 10th, at 6pm. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Approvals & Updates:

- A. 647 Butler - Gutters.
- B. 868 Holland - Sign.
- C. 237 Butler – Siding, gutters.
- D. 790 Lake - Fence.

Zoning Administrator Cummins updated the Commission on the mural. The owner found a product that will have minimum impact to brick & mortar and will begin work soon.

Communication: None.

Public Comment: None.

Commission Comments:

Gardner questioned Cummins on whether they should mention that an appeal was filed for the Village Square playground. Cummins said that he sent an email to all of the Commissioners notifying them that there was an appeal filed by the Maplewood Hotel, reapproval of the additional features at the Village Square playground. He said that Council met in a closed session the day before to discuss the next steps and a whole lot to add at this point. He told the Commission that if they had any questions, he would be happy to meet with any of them. Straker questioned whether there was a requirement to be involved in the process and Cummins said not at this point.

Adjourn:

Motion by Godfrey, second by Cannarsa to adjourn. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chairman Straker adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Sara Williams

Deputy Clerk