



**Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes
Meeting – May 21, 2020**

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 6pm at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street.

Due to the Corona Virus situation, the meeting was conducted via a conference call where all Commissioners and applicants called in.

The meeting was also broadcasted live on TownHallStreams.com.

Commissioners Attendance:

Present: Susan Morgan - Vice Chair, Commissioners Laura Oliphant, Sharon Smith and Hershel Johnson

Absent: George Vojtech - Chairman

Liaison: City Council Commissioner Steve Rideout (present)

Other Representatives Attending:

Herve Hamon, Planning and Zoning, Planner I and Historic Preservation

Vice Chair Susan Morgan chaired the meeting in the absence of George Vojtech; she called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. She began the meeting by conducting a roll call, issuing a welcome, and explained to the applicants they would be sworn in as they were planning to testify.

Review of the Agenda:

Comm. Smith made a motion to approve the agenda; Comm. Johnson seconded. The agenda was approved as submitted.

Approval of Minutes:

Review of April 16, 2020 HPC Meeting Minutes. Comm. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, it was seconded by Commissioner Oliphant; all approved unanimously.

Old Business:

HPC 2019-050 104 Vue De Leau – Front Porch (deferred from April 16, 2020)

The applicant was unable to connect to the HPC call on April 16.

This is an application to renovate the front porch and remove the cedar shingle cladded low parapet walls at the front porch. In lieu of the parapet walls, the applicant proposes to install open wood balustrades, with 1” square balusters, and a soft round edge wood rail.

The applicant proposes to retain the existing cedar shingle cladded porch columns, and re-use the shingles of the low walls to clad the one porch column still bare.

Comm. Smith made a motion to approve the application as submitted; Comm. Johnson seconded, all approved unanimously.

New Business:

HPC 2020-053 108 Belvedere Avenue – Change of Roofing Material

This is an application to substitute the roofing material of a building addition previously approved (standing seam metal) to architectural 3-Tab asphalt shingles.

Staff was joined by Comm. Oliphant in expressing that the shallow slope of the roof was not conducive to the use of asphalt shingles, and that special waterproofing measures (continuous ice & water shield installed by contractor) were necessary.

The applicant explained the roof would receive solar panels in the future, and asphalt shingles were preferable.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the application as submitted, Comm. Smith seconded, all approved unanimously.

HPC 2020-054 122 West End Avenue – Shed (after-the-fact) and Fence

This is an application to get approval of a garden shed installed prior to the meeting, and the construction of a rear yard privacy fence.

The shed was part of a closing negotiation for the purchase of the property, and provides essential storage necessary for the applicant to be able to move in. The applicant has transformed the house in a single family dwelling. The shed matches the house in overall style and color, and complies with all zoning regulations for accessory buildings.

The proposed 6 foot tall rear yard stockade pine fence is found in many examples in Cambridge.

Commissioner Oliphant made a motion to approve the application as submitted, it was seconded by Comm. Smith; all approved unanimously.

HPC 2020-055 204 Belvedere Avenue – Railings and Back Deck

This is an application to install railings at the front steps, build a wheelchair lift at the rear and construct a back deck.

The applicant and his spouse are both getting elderly and in need of measures to alleviate physical difficulties with level changes. There are currently 2 sets of steps in the front yard, and 7 steps at the back door towards the yard.

The applicant proposed to install metal railings at the front steps, custom made steel, painted black, with a “Prairie Style” pattern designed by Jay Corvan, architect.

The chairlift being a necessary ADA accessibility measure was approved by staff and its concrete pad for support is underway. Staff explained that to connect the top of the chair lift to the back door, there was a gap of 7 feet requiring bridging. Either an aluminum ramp system or a deck would accomplish the connection.

The applicant’s preferred option is to build a deck out of Cumaru wood (a Brazilian sustainably harvested hard wood), and use metal rigging instead of traditional balusters for maximum visibility of the back yard.

The Commission discussed the deck and its railing proposal, and highlighted the fact that the deck in the rear was completely invisible from the street and the adjacent neighbors.

Vice Chair Morgan commented that the metal rigging was not in keeping with the Historic District character. Commissioner Oliphant expressed that since the deck was not visible, and had no visual impact on the street, the aesthetic choice should be up to the owners, and the solution chosen should be for their enjoyment.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the application as submitted. A vote took place, and Comm. Smith, Oliphant and Johnson were in favor, while Vice-Chair Morgan was opposed. The motion carried by 3 to 1, and the application was approved.

HPC 2020-05 108 Choptank Avenue – Shed Demolition

This is an application to demolish 2 noncontributing sheds in the rear yard, and replace them by one enlarged accessory structure.

The existing sheds have been both damaged by rising tide flooding.

The applicant is proposing to build a 24'x40' barn like 18' tall building with gambrel roof, and use metal paneling emulating the aspect of board and batten (Classic Rib 36" acrylic coated Galvalume panels), for both the roof and the walls.

Staff explained that the applicant has experience with building similar structures in St Michaels, and has managed to include trim details and ornamentation into his design that carry the use of an industrial material into the realm of residential architectural language.

The Commission commented that the building was quite large, and did not see the building shape and finish material as fitting in.

Members of the public (Peter Barclay at 106 Choptank, Peter Doyle at 104 Choptank, and Cheryl Hannan at 103 Mill Street) all expressed their concern about the scale of the building, and the aspect of the front and side elevation they would be looking at, and would be visible from Choptank Avenue and from Water Street.

Vice Chair Morgan and Commissioner Oliphant both expressed that the gambrel silhouette was inappropriate for the location, and increased the mass of the building.

Commissioner Smith and Vice Chair Morgan cited chapters 5 and 6 of the 2018 Cambridge Historic District design Guidelines, regarding appropriate scale of building, and consistent material within neighborhood context. They also referred to Article 9 of the Sec. of Interior Standards, expressing the need for an accessory structure or addition to be compatible in size and mass with the main building and the neighborhood.

The applicant and the Commission discussed material alternatives and massing modifications (such as creating a gable recalling the house rather than a gambrel silhouette).

Vice-Chair Morgan explained that the Commission would seek advice from the Maryland Historical Trust regarding the use of the proposed metal panels as an acceptable appropriate material in the context of a residential historic neighborhood.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to defer the decision until the application is re-submitted at the June 18, 2020 HPC meeting, asking the applicant to look into reducing visually the size and scale of the building, and further explore façade material options. Comm. Oliphant seconded that motion, all approved unanimously.

HPC 2020-057 Long Wharf Park – Sign Installation

This is an application to build a low profile sign at the entrance of Long Wharf Park.

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This application was presented by the Rotary Club as their community service project for this year. The 2'-3" tall base of the sign is proposed to be built out of donated river stones on a concrete base; the lettering of the sign is to be achieved with iron letters painted black, and lit at night.

Commissioner Johnson expressed how pleased he was that there would be a sign at Long Wharf to identify the location to all, residents and visitors.

Comm. Johnson made a motion to approve the application as submitted; it was seconded by Comm. Smith; all approved unanimously.

Vice-Chair Morgan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Commissioner Smith to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Commissioner Oliphant and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Herve Hamon
Planning & Zoning
Planner I & Historic Preservation

Signature: Susan Morgan Date: 6 July 2020 ^{Vice} HPC Chairman