



Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Ben Wiles, Vice Chair; Dr. Dean Bennett; Frank Gilmore; Christopher Marney

STAFF: Matt Smith, Senior Planner; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

EXCUSED: Shaun Andriano

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Commissioner Wiles recused himself from the consideration of the application by AJ Signs on behalf of Lofts II at Union Square.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Marney, to approve the November 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Beau Ballard and Magen Coleman to install a new roof. The premises are located at 6 Morris Avenue in the Morris Avenue Historic District.

Beau Ballard and Magen Coleman presented the application.

Mr. Ballard explained that the original slate roof on the house has reached the end of its lifespan and is leaking and causing water damage inside the home. He stated that he and his wife have investigated replacing areas of the slate, but the slates are an unusual design that are no longer available, and because of their unique dimensions and thickness it would not be plausible to replace them with the types of slate that are more readily available today. Ms. Coleman stated that they have contacted 27 contractors regarding repairing the slate roof but received a reply from only one. Mr. Ballard stated that the cost to completely replace the slate roof with new slates would be approximately \$75,000, which would be almost as much as the total value of the property.

Mr. Ballard showed the Commissioners samples of two alternative Stormmaster® slate shingles that they had chosen, which they believe most closely match the look of the existing slate. The Commissioners agreed that their first-choice color, Weathered Slate, is most similar to the existing roof. Commissioner Marney asked the applicants if they have photographs of the condition of the existing roof. Mr. Ballard passed out photos of the roof and the interior water damage caused by its leaking. Commissioner Yager stated that at over 100 years old the existing slate roof is certainly near the end of its life span and she would have no objection to replacing it under these circumstances. She stated that while researching the proposed shingles online she had come across some consumer complaints regarding the manufacturer not honoring their warranty, and thus she cautioned the applicants to do their own research before proceeding with this product. Commissioner Marney asked what the timeline for the project is. Mr. Ballard stated that they hope to be able to be on the contractor's schedule for July.

Commissioner Bennett commented that because the house has a large front gable facing the street most of the roof is only visible when looking from the sides of the home, and thus he does not feel that the slate was a very prominent feature on the front façade. The other Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Wiles asked the applicants if any of the other homes on Morris Avenue have extant slate roofs. Mr. Ballard stated that he is only aware of one besides theirs. Commissioner Wiles asked if the shingles that they are proposing to use have been installed elsewhere on the street. Mr. Ballard stated that he does not believe so.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Marney, to approve as submitted the application to remove the existing slate roof and replace it with Atlas Roofing Stormmaster® Slate shingles in Weathered Slate, with the following modifications and conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The drip edge will be copper.
3. The applicants will submit a report to City staff with pictorial and text evidence demonstrating that the existing slate roof is not salvageable.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. Because the home has a gabled front roofline the original slate roof was not a prominent feature on the front façade of the structure and was mainly visible from the side views only.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by AJ Signs on behalf of Lofts II at Union Square to install a sign. The premises are located at 525 Union Street in the Union Street Historic District.

Carly Clark of AJ Signs presented the application.

Ms. Clark presented drawings of the proposed sign and explained that Steve Becker, who is a partial owner of the building, plans to move his State Farm Insurance business to this location from Niskayuna. She explained that State Farm has national branding guidelines for their signs that will be in Historic Districts, so they based the design of the sign on those guidelines. She added that although Mr. Becker is allowed two signs, because the building is located on a corner, he has chosen to have only one as he believes it will be sufficient to identify the location of the office. Ms. Clark explained that the sign will be constructed of an aluminum composite with vinyl graphics and a satin-finish overlay, and that it will not be internally lit. Commissioner Yager asked if the gold on the sign will have a metallic finish. Ms. Clark stated that it will, but because of the satin overlay the gold will not be obtrusively shiny or sparkly.

Commissioner Gilmore asked Mr. Smith if the sign is within the allowed size. Mr. Smith stated that it is. Ms. Clark stated that the sign could have been larger, but Mr. Becker did not feel it was necessary. Commissioner Yager commented that she appreciates the applicant's efforts to design a sign that is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and respectful of the surrounding historic properties, even though 525 Union Street is a relatively new building. The other Commissioners agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve as submitted the application to install the sign with the following condition:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously, with Commissioner Wiles recusing himself from the vote.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by John Samatulski on behalf of Zakhar Berkovich to paint the house. The premises are located at 1336 Lowell Road in the GE Realty Plot Historic District.

John Samatulski presented the application.

Mr. Samatulski reviewed the proposed colors. Commissioner Gilmore asked what the finish of the colors will be, adding that in his opinion the front door should have a high gloss finish. Mr. Samatulski agreed, stating that the front door will be high gloss, the shutters satin, and the body of the house flat.

The Commissioners indicated that they had no objections to the color or finishes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve as submitted the application to paint the exterior of the house, with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house will be painted Valspar Prudence (7004-13), the trim will be painted Valspar Ultra White (7006-24), the shutters will be painted Benjamin Moore Salamander (2050-10), and the front door will be Valspar Antique Burgundy (1011-6).

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Deonarine Nandlall to install new windows. The premises are located at 1024 Wendell Avenue in the Union Triangle Historic District.

Deonarine Nandlall presented the application.

Mr. Nandlall explained that he recently purchased the property and would like to replace all of the existing wood windows with vinyl replacement windows. Commissioner Yager stated that the Commission does not approve vinyl windows that can be seen from the right of way, but that wood or aluminum-clad wood would be acceptable alternatives. Commissioner Marney stated that vinyl is not an

appropriate material within the historic district. He added that from the photos provided by Mr. Nandlall it appears as if many of the windows could be repaired rather than replaced, which is always the preferred option of the Commission according to the Department of Interior standards that they are required to follow. Commissioner Marney stated that in his opinion the applicant had not provided sufficient information to show that the windows need to be replaced, rather than repaired.

The Commissioners and Mr. Nandlall discussed the energy efficiency of new versus older windows. Mr. Nandlall stated that wood windows would cost more than double than the vinyl. Commissioner Yager stated that the Commission could not consider cost in its decisions. Mr. Nandlall stated that he would be willing to repair the front windows if the Commission allowed him to use vinyl windows on the sides and rear. Commissioner Marney stated that the rear of the house is not within the Commission's purview as it is not visible from the right of way, but the side windows are visible and thus cannot be vinyl.

Mr. Smith explained that he had not informed the applicant that aluminum-clad wood is an option because he had not been aware that the Commissioners would allow this material. Commissioner Yager stated that the Commission has approved aluminum-clad wood in the past. After further discussion it was decided that the application should be tabled to give Mr. Nandlall more time to submit additional information regarding the condition of the current windows and which type of replacement window he would prefer to use, when and if they are necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to table the application pending the submittal of additional information, including:

1. Photographic evidence showing that the existing wood windows the applicant wishes to replace are beyond repair.
2. A drawing of the building site showing which windows are proposed to be repaired and which will be replaced.
3. Cut sheets showing the specifications of the proposed replacement windows. The windows may be wood or aluminum-clad wood.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner Yager asked Mr. Smith if he had investigated the unapproved purple sign on Union Street. Mr. Smith stated that he had not yet but will follow up as soon as possible.

Commissioner Marney stated that he had observed new windows being installed at 2 North Ferry Street which appear to him to be vinyl. Staff will follow up.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Wiles, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.