



Schenectady Historic District Commission

**Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2019**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

STAFF: Avi Epstein, Zoning Officer; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Commissioner Gilmore recused himself from the consideration of New Business Item G, the application submitted by Douglas Davis for 704 Union Street.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Marney, to approve the April 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS - APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Clinton Sager to replace existing shingles and roofing with charcoal colored architectural asphalt shingles from GAF. The premises are located at 232 Green Street in the Stockade Historic District.

Clinton Sager presented the application.

Mr. Sager explained that when he had the building inspected for a rental certificate he received a violation notice from the City because the roof was in disrepair. He stated that the Inspector found that the underlayment boards had shrunk and were allowing water to come through the roof. He stated that in order to repair the roof the slate and existing shingles must be removed and a whole new wood layer put on. Commissioner Yager asked if he will have a water shield applied to the roof. Mr. Sager responded that he will, and he is planning to apply it further up the roof than is required by Code.

Commissioner Andriano asked if the slate roof is original to the house. Mr. Sager stated that it is, and that the building was built in 1840. Commissioner Gilmore asked if the color shingle selected most closely matches the slate. Mr. Sager responded that it does, as the slate is dark in color. He noted that the roof is very difficult to see from the street. Commissioner Andriano asked if the existing slates could be retained and reapplied. Mr. Sager responded that the contractor who had been maintaining the roof told him that this would not be possible, as the slates are at the end of their life span. He noted that a new slate roof would be cost prohibitive.

Mr. Sager and the Commissioners discussed the color of the drip edge; it was decided that it should match the color of the trim on the building. Commissioner Wiles asked if either of the neighboring properties have slate roofs. Mr. Sager stated that he does not think so, but he wasn't sure. Commissioner Wiles stated that in this case the roof is barely visible from the street and at the end of its lifespan, and thus he could support removing it. The Commissioners agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the application to replace the existing shingles and roofing with Timberline GAF Ultra HD® shingles in the color Charcoal as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The drip edge will match the building trim.
3. Crickets will be installed behind the chimneys to divert water away from the chimney masonry.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The applicant received a violation notice from the City because the underlayment of the roof was in very poor repair. The applicant states that the existing slate is not salvageable and must be removed to repair the underlayment. The City Code Inspector's report supports this position.
3. The Commission is inclined to allow the removal of the existing slate in this case because the roof is barely visible from the public right-of-way, and thus the loss of the slate will have a minimal impact on the overall historic appearance of the structure. If the roof were more visible it would be much more difficult to justify its removal.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Samantha Legere to repaint the exterior of the house with four different colors as submitted and to install a 6-foot high cedar fence in the “Berkshire” style around the perimeter of the lot. The premises are located at 4 North Street and 123 Front Street respectively. Both properties are located in the Stockade Historic District.

Samantha Legere presented the application.

Ms. Legere explained that she recently purchased the house at 4 North Street and the adjoining vacant lot at 123 Front Street. She stated that she would like to paint the house using colors that are of a more historic palette than the current colors, and install a fence around the vacant lot, which will serve as her yard. Commissioner Wiles asked why Ms. Legere is installing the fence. Ms. Legere responded that it is both for privacy and security. She stated that without the fence many pedestrians cut across the lot, and there is also quite a bit of litter left there. Commissioner Andriano asked if they plan to leave the large tree. Ms. Legere replied that they will keep the tree and very carefully install the fence around it. The Commissioners indicated that they had no objection to the fence.

Commissioner Andriano asked Ms. Legere if she had a plan for painting the accent colors. Ms. Legere stated that she is not sure yet and added that she would be happy to return to the Commission with a plan later, but she would like permission to paint the body of the house and the trim so that she can do that as soon as weather permits. The Commissioners agreed that they could approve the body and trim colors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A letter from Robert Stern of 5 North Street was entered into the record. Mr. Stern stated that he is not opposed to the fence if it is installed to meet the City Code. *Zoning Officer Epstein commented that the fence meets the Code and the City has no objection to its installation.*

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the application to repaint the exterior body and trim of the house and install a 6’ cedar fence in the “Berkshire” style around the perimeter of the lot as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house will be painted in Sherwin Williams Sheraton Sage (SW 0014) and the trim will be painted Sherwin Williams Downing Sand (SW 2822). The accent colors are removed from this application. The

applicant will return to the Commission later with a specific plan for the accent color painting.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The fence will not permanently alter the property and can be removed at any time.
3. The fence meets all the related zoning regulations.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by Timothy Castle on behalf of the City Mission of Schenectady to modify a previously approved freestanding sign by replacing the aluminum posts with brick columns with the panels to be framed in aluminum. The premises are located at 816 Union Street in the Union Street Historic District.

Timothy Castle presented the application.

Mr. Castle explained that the project had previously had a sign approved by the Commission but they decided they would like to have a design that looks more substantial and in keeping with the style of the building and the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Andriano asked what the depth of the piers will be and if they will be actual brick. Mr. Castle replied that they are proposing 20-inch square piers and they would be brick with a precast concrete top cap. He added that they would like the brick to be close to the color of the brick on the building. Commissioner Andriano stated that for the longevity of the sign he would recommend a concrete base to protect the bottom of the piers from ground moisture, and that the concrete top be sealed or painted to seal out water which could eventually deteriorate the piers. He noted that the concrete should be rubbed to give it a more polished, smooth look. Commissioner Gilmore suggested a bluestone cap, which would be a complimentary color and would naturally shed water. The Commissioners discussed these options and decided that either would be acceptable, and that staff could approve the final sign design.

The Commissioners discussed the actual sign panel. Mr. Castle explained that at a previous meeting the Commission had suggested halo lighting with raised letters, and while there was not room on the sign for that type of lighting, they would like to raise the main logo at the top of the sign to add some dimension and interest. Commissioner Yager stated that because of the age of the building she did not have any objection to the sign design, as it appeared to be in keeping with the building style. The Commissioners agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve the application for the sign with brick columns and aluminum framed panels as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The piers will be topped with a bluestone cap of two to four inches in thickness or a concrete cap of four inches. If the cap is concrete, it will be rubbed to hide the aggregates and give a smooth appearance and sealed or painted to mitigate the absorption of water into the piers.
3. A concrete base of eight inches in thickness will be installed under the piers to protect them from the ground moisture. The concrete will be rubbed to hide the aggregates and give it a smooth appearance.
4. The final design of the sign, including the base and pier tops, will be submitted to City Staff for approval prior to the installation of the sign.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commission had previously approved a sign for this property but feels that this sign is a better design and more in keeping with the style of the building and more harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Diane Runkel to remove aluminum siding on two sides of the house and repair with clapboard, paint all four sides, restore front façade, and install a metal gate on the side of the house. The premises are located at 12 North College Street in the Stockade Historic District.

Diane Runkel and her husband George presented the application.

Mrs. Runkel explained that she had previously been before the Commission for an application for window replacement on the property, and would now like to remove the aluminum siding that is on the front and side of the home, repair all the wood siding as necessary, add back the trim work that was removed from the front façade, paint the house, and install a gate on the side of the house. Mrs. Runkel stated that the house has been in her family for four generations, and it is very important to her that it be properly restored.

Mrs. Runkel stated that there was previously a gate on the side of the house, and the posts remain. The Commissioners indicated that they had no objection to the

proposed gate design. She explained that she has found a carpenter who will replace all the lost trim on the front of the house. She noted that they had removed a portion of the aluminum siding and from what they could see much of the original wood siding and shingles are still intact. Commissioner Gilmore stated that the house was originally of the stick style and would have been painted several different colors to show off all the details of the woodwork. Commissioner Yager asked if the original doors were still on the house. Mrs. Runkel stated that they are, and they plan to refinish them. The Commissioners and the applicant discussed the front porch area, and Mrs. Runkel stated that she plans to return in the future with an application to restore the front porch and repair the sidewalk.

Commissioner Yager asked Mrs. Runkel if she knew what the original color of the house was. Mrs. Runkel stated that she only remembered it as green, and there is some green left under the siding, but it is a lime green shade and clearly not an historically accurate color. The Commissioners and Mrs. Runkel discussed the paint colors. Mrs. Runkel stated that there is a repeating fan motif in the woodwork which she would like to accent with the dark gray color. She added that she would like to paint the corner boards the same white as the trim. Commissioner Andriano suggested a white with a slight vanilla tint to soften the contrast between that and the gray colors. The Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Bennett asked what the roof material is. Mrs. Runkel stated that it is slate and has been regularly maintained. She noted that her roofing contractor had assured her that it still had a long life remaining.

The Commissioners commended Mrs. Runkel for her efforts and expressed their excitement about the project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the application to remove the aluminum siding on two sides of the house, repair the clapboard, paint all four sides, restore the front facade, install a metal gate on the side of the house, and any further work necessary to restore the front façade of the house as closely as possible to the historic photo provided, as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The body of the house will be Behr Letter Gray (PPU 24-20), the fish scale shingles will be Behr Jojoba (N390-3), the accent color will be Behr Shadow Mountain (PPU 24-22), and the trim will be white. The Commission recommends a white with a slight vanilla tint, as opposed to a stark white, to soften the contrast with the other colors, and that the Shadow

Mountain be a semi-gloss finish to allow the accents to stand out against the trim.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. This property has been owned by the same family for four generations. The applicant has demonstrated a strong desire to restore the house to its original appearance, and it is likely that this project will succeed due to her strong dedication and significant investment of time and funds. When it is finished the structure will be a great addition to the street and will serve as a wonderful inspiration for other historic property owners.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration for approval submitted by Dunn & Dunn, PLLC to replace 47 windows with double-hung windows by Pella, and to replace the front and rear doors. Some of the windows are proposed as aluminum-clad wood and some as vinyl. The premises are located at 704 Union Street in the Union Street Historic District.

Kirsten Dunn presented the application.

Ms. Dunn explained that she and her husband had recently acquired the building and wished to replace some of the windows with aluminum-clad wood windows and some with vinyl windows. She stated that the vinyl would be on the rear of the building. Commissioner Yager stated that the rear of the building is visible from a right of way. Commissioner Marney stated that the application lacked sufficient evidence to prove that the existing windows are beyond repair. He noted that to his knowledge the Commission does not approve vinyl as an acceptable material. Zoning Officer Epstein noted that if there are existing vinyl windows in a building they may be replaced in kind, but otherwise the Standards do not support the use of vinyl products. Ms. Dunn apologized, stating that her husband had been handling the details of the windows and she was not certain of the exact specifications for each proposed window.

Commissioner Marney stated that he did not fully grasp which windows are proposed for each opening, as it is not clear in the application. Commissioner Gilmore suggested that Ms. Dunn prepare larger elevation drawings and specifically note the details of the proposed windows for each opening. Commissioner Andriano agreed, stating that the Commissioners need more information regarding the materials and condition of the existing windows, a specific plan showing where each new window will go, and specifications for each type of proposed new window. The Commissioners agreed and decided to table the application pending the submittal of this additional information.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

MOTION TO TABLE

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

1. Specific photographic evidence showing that the existing windows are beyond repair and must be removed.
2. Elevations drawings showing each specific window opening and noting the proposed replacement window, including the proposed materials and design of the window.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consideration for approval submitted by Douglas Davis to install an addition, second-floor seasonal deck, outdoor patio in front and back, a 4-foot black iron fence, and raised planting beds. The premises are located at 607 Union Street in the Union Street Historic District.

Douglas Davis presented the application.

Mr. Davis explained that he is under contract to purchase the existing Manhattan Exchange restaurant and would like to construct a one-story addition to the building with a rooftop deck on the second level. He stated that this will allow him to add additional dining tables on the first floor of the building, as now most of the dining is on the second floor of the restaurant. He noted that he also plans to add a second bar on the second floor.

Commissioner Yager commented that she is pleased that the second-floor door to the deck will be put where an existing window is, which will minimize the disturbance of the existing brick. Mr. Davis stated that when designing the addition they tried to mitigate the impact on the existing building as much as possible. Commissioner Yager asked if the only handicap accessibility will be at the rear of the building. Mr. Davis stated it will be, and that is where it is now. He explained that they had tried designing a ramp at the front of the building, but it took up too much space and was very obtrusive.

Commissioner Andriano stated that the front windows of the addition keep the same rhythm as the rest of the building, which helps it to harmonize with the historic elements. He asked what the proposed materials of the addition are. Mr. Davis responded that it will be brick, but they had not decided on the exact brick color yet, as he was not sure if they should try to match the existing building. Commissioner Bennett stated that according to the standards and guidelines the

brick should be distinct enough to show that the addition was constructed at a different time than the main building.

Commissioner Wiles asked if they had given any consideration to setting the addition back six inches, to more distinctly differentiate it from the original building. Mr. Davis stated that they had, but they did not like how it impacted the upstairs deck, as it would create a corner that might limit the views of the customers on the deck. He also noted that because they are trying to maximize the space they are gaining from the addition they decided against the small setback because with it they would lose some interior space. Commissioner Andriano suggested adding some sort of channel or pattern in the brick that would make it clear where the old building ends and the new construction begins. The Commissioners discussed this and decided that it would be a good alternative to a setback.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve the application to construct the addition and second-floor deck, add a front and back outdoor patio, and install a four-foot high iron fence and raised planting beds as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. A delineation in the brick will be created to clarify the transition from the existing building to the new addition. Between the new and old bricks a row of bricks will be installed lengthwise and recessed a minimum of one inch to create this visual divider.
3. The final proposed canvas material will be submitted to staff for approval prior to the installation of any canvas.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The applicant has no plans to replace the existing sign at this time. Should he decide to install a new sign he will return to the Commission for review prior to purchasing or installing the sign.
3. The new construction does not destroy any historic materials and harmonizes with the historic building's style while making clear that it is an addition that was made later. It also allows the applicant to make the business more viable in a way that could not be achieved by an alternate means.
4. The second-floor door to the new deck will be placed where an existing window is to minimize the disturbance of the brick.

Motion carried, with Commissioner Gilmore recusing himself from the vote.

G. Consideration for approval submitted by Greta Pierre-Louis to replace the railings installed by the previous owner without HDC approval. The premises are located at 1080 University Place in the Union Triangle Historic District.

The applicant failed to appear at the meeting.

Because the Commissioners felt that they needed more information before considering the proposal they decided to table the application.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to table the application for the following reason:

1. The Commissioners felt that they needed further information from the applicant before considering the application, and the applicant was not present at the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.