



Schenectady Historic District Commission

**Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2019**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Ben Wiles, Vice Chair; Shaun Andriano; Frank Gilmore

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

EXCUSED: Dr. Dean Bennett; Christopher Marney

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve the May 23, 2019 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS - APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Lyndon Walters to replace the existing 3-tab style shingles with architectural shingles by TAMKO. The premises are located at 1010 Nott Street in the GE Realty Plot Historic District.

Lyndon Walters presented the application.

Mr. Walters explained that since he and his wife purchased the home in 2016, they have had to repair the roof several times, especially on the western side where the wind hits it the most. He stated that he has consulted with several roofing contractors, all of whom concluded that the roof should be replaced. He noted that because some of the damage was proven to be caused by weather part of the roof replacement cost will be covered by his homeowners' insurance.

Commissioner Gilmore noted that on a shingle-style house such as this the roof and siding were meant to look like sculpted skins over the entire house, and almost always the original roofs were the same wood shingles as were used on the facades

of the structure. He noted that this would not be practical today, but he would support a shingle that closely matched the appearance of wood shingles and also matched the color of the body of the house. Commissioner Yager noted that the existing three-tab shingles are obviously not original to the home and architectural-style shingles would appear more like the original wood shingles.

Zoning Officer Epstein noted that a 2014 application to the Commission to replace the roof with architectural-style shingles had been denied. Commissioner Wiles stated that while he was on the Commission at that time he had not been present at that particular meeting, but in reading the decision it was clear that at that time the Commissioners supported replacing the existing three-tab shingle roof with one of the same style. Commissioner Andriano asked Mr. Walters if when the roof had been repaired it had been repaired in kind. Mr. Walters stated that they had used shingles that were as close to the existing as they could find. Commissioner Andriano stated that he would have no objection to the architectural-style shingle in this case because it more closely matches the appearance of the original roof than the three-tab shingles. He also noted that the drip edge color should match the trim on the house as closely as possible. The other Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Yager shared information that she had found in her research regarding extensive litigation against TAMKO due to failures of their products. She suggested that should Mr. Walters choose to use a different shingle by another manufacturer in light of this information he would have to submit it to City staff for approval prior to installation of the roof. Mr. Walters agreed that he would do so.

The Commissioners and Mr. Walters discussed the color of the shingles and it was determined that the Rustic Slate color would be the closest to the body color of the house and therefore the most historically appropriate. Commissioner Gilmore stated that the flashing around the chimney should be copper, as it would have been originally. The Commissioners agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the application to replace the existing three-tab shingled roof with architectural shingles with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The shingles will be TAMKO Heritage architectural style shingles in Rustic Slate. Due to the pending litigation discussed at the meeting, if the applicant decides to use a shingle from another manufacturer it will be of a similar color and he will submit it to City staff for approval prior to installing the new roof.

3. The flashing around the chimney will be copper in keeping with what would have historically been used.
4. The drip edge of the roof will be white to match the trim color of the house as closely as possible.
5. If there is a second roof surface found under the existing shingles the applicant will take photos of that surface if at all possible and submit the photos and any information gathered regarding the surface to City staff for the property file.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The applicant has attempted to repair the roof in kind several times but has been told by a roofing contractor that at this point the whole roof should be replaced.
3. Several years ago, previous owners of the property had submitted an application to replace the roof. That application was denied by the Commission because they did not support the use of architectural shingles on this house. At this time it is the Commission's opinion that of the asphalt shingle styles available today the architectural shingles will most closely match the wood shingles which most likely would have been used on a shingle-style house such as this one, and therefore the architectural shingles are the most historically appropriate choice.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Gloria Kishton to replace the existing concrete walkway with a hand-troweled walkway and remove concrete between the house and walkway and replace with a garden and a 3' aluminum fence. The premises are located at 207 Union Street in the Stockade Historic District.

Gloria Kishton presented the application.

Ms. Kishton briefly reviewed the application and explained that the sidewalk is in disrepair and needs replacement. She stated that most of her neighbors on this side of Union Street have a small garden area between the building and the sidewalk, and she would like to install a similar space. She noted that the new sidewalk would be hand-troweled to simulate the original bluestone sidewalks in this area. Ms. Kishton stated that the sidewalk contractor has done many similar sidewalks in the neighborhood and she is very pleased with the quality of his work.

Commissioner Yager suggested that the plantings not be placed too close to the house and that the garden should be graded slightly away from the building to help mitigate and water or moisture issues. Ms. Kishton stated that she is very

conscious of those concerns and she is also strongly considering adding a small strip of concrete between the house and the garden to act as an added protection against any potential problems. The Commissioners briefly discussed the proposed fence and noted that it has been used on other similar properties in the Stockade and that they believe it to be an historically appropriate design.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Wiles, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the application to replace the existing concrete walkway with a hand-troweled walkway, and to remove concrete between the house and the walkway and replace with a garden with a 3' aluminum fence as submitted 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.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by Gregory Dunn to replace 47 windows with double-hung windows by Pella. The premises are located at 704 Union Street in the Union Historic District.

Greg Dunn presented the application.

Mr. Dunn explained that he is proposing to replace 47 windows on the building with new wood windows by Pella. He briefly reviewed materials that he had submitted to the Commission, which included a list of all of the windows and their locations, as well as materials evaluating each window individually and noting the problems with each. He stated that he had submitted pictures of the windows to the Commission via email. Mr. Dunn also noted that there had been a mistake on a previous version of the application on which several of the windows were noted as to be replaced with vinyl windows. He stated that it has never been his intention to replace any of the windows with vinyl windows.

Commissioner Yager stated that she had gone through the list of windows and the notes regarding their disrepair, as well as the photographs, and she had concluded that most of the windows can be repaired rather than replaced. She noted that some were noted to need new weights or sash rope, both of which are readily available at at least one local hardware store. She stated that many of the windows have unique hardware that could never be replicated. Commissioner Yager stated that it is the

policy of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Commission, that windows should be restored rather than replaced whenever possible because they are a very important characteristic of historic buildings, and there are no windows available today that would not at least slightly alter a façade in which they are placed. She also noted that historic wood windows are constructed of old growth wood which is not used on the wood windows currently being manufactured, and therefore these windows do not have the lifespan of the old-growth wood windows.

Mr. Dunn stated that one issue he has with the current windows is that they lack the energy efficiency that newer windows would provide, and he does not think that the aluminum storms that currently cover them are historically appropriate. He stated that they alter the look of the facades because they do not allow the depth of the historic windows to be visible. Commissioner Gilmore noted that new wood replacement windows will also not provide that depth, as most contractors install them so the glass is flush with the façade because it is easier and much less expensive to do than to set them back. Mr. Dunn stated that he would not want this type of installation for this building, as this too would negatively alter the look of the façade. Commissioner Gilmore stated that he could give Mr. Dunn the name of a contact who constructs wood storm windows for historic buildings. Commissioner Yager also gave Mr. Dunn the name of a window restoration contractor that Commissioner Marney had asked her to pass along.

Mr. Dunn stated that he would not be opposed to investigating whether the windows can be repaired and have new wood storms fitted, but he does not want to wait another month to move forward on the project. Zoning Officer Epstein stated that Mr. Dunn may move forward on any interior work, and he also can do any of the window repairs without further approval because that would be considered in kind repairs. He noted that if Mr. Dunn decides that some of the windows cannot be repaired and must be replaced he would have to return to the Commission for consideration. Commissioner Yager asked what Mr. Dunn would propose for the windows that are currently vinyl. Mr. Dunn stated that he would prefer to replace them with wood windows if he could find someone to make them. Commissioner Yager stated that she would not be opposed to this course of action. The Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Epstein stated that in their decision the Commissioners should consider whether the windows have a significant impact on the building's facades, as stated in SHPO's standards. Commissioner Gilmore stated that replacement windows, even those constructed of wood, would look significantly different than the original windows. Commissioner Gilmore asked Mr. Dunn if he has decided on a color scheme for the building yet. Mr. Dunn stated that he has not, but he plans to submit an application for painting in the near future. Commissioner Gilmore suggested using an accent color for the windows, as it will enhance the appearance of their setback.

Mr. Epstein asked Mr. Dunn what the plan is for the missing windows noted on the application. Mr. Dunn stated that they are basement windows that are behind the porch area, and thus are not visible from the public right of way. Mr. Epstein stated that if they are not visible they do not require the Commission's approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Yager, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to deny the application based on the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. Based on SHPO standards, when it is possible the recommendation is to repair and restore the windows rather than replace them. The design and details of the original windows, including the hardware and other unique characteristics, are important to preserve because they are an essential component of the historic fabric of the building.
3. After careful consideration by the Commissioners it appears that many, if not all, of the windows can be restored. A contractor with experience in historic preservation should be consulted to finalize the determination of whether or not each of the windows can be preserved.
4. The basement windows noted as "missing" in the application are not within the view of a public right of way and therefore are not within the Commission's purview.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.