

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
LOWELL DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CITY OF LOWELL, MICHIGAN

For the Meeting of the Downtown Historic District Commission on Tuesday March 27, 2012. The Meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Chairman Doyle and Lori Gerard called the Roll.

Present: Judy Straub, Chris Fleszar and Chairman Stephen Doyle

Absent: Dr. Robert Reagan & Greg Canfield

Also Present: Jean Schwacha, Rita Reister, Councilmember Jim Hall and Lori Gerard

IT WAS MOVED BY STRAUB and supported by FLESZAR to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 24, 2012 as written.

YEA: 3 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 2 **MOTION CARRIED**

Item #1 **317 E Main – Rita Reister – signage** Rita Reister from The Flat River Cottage and Jean Schwacha from Night Forest Jewelry were present to discuss their application for signage at 317 E Main. The building is owned by Greg Canfield. Signs have been approved by the City Building Inspector Doug Hopkins pending HDC approval. Three signs will hang to the west of the door entrance in a vertical pattern. Signs will be for Flat River Cottage, Night Forest Jewelry and R. Lucas Scott Co. Chairman Doyle commented that the signs were an appropriate scale with the building. Commissioner Straub questioned if the three signs all looked aesthetically well together as they are each unique. Reister stated that they will all be framed in a black painted frame which will tie them together.

IT WAS MOVED BY FLESZAR and supported by STRAUB to approve the signage at 317 E. Main as presented.

YEA: 3 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 2 **MOTION CARRIED**

Item #2 **Project Updates.** Chairman Doyle commented that the roofer was working on the 207 W Main – Reagan project.

It was noted that a progress report was received for 217 W Main Giggles & Gumdrops for their awning replacement project. Owner Melissa Freeman stated that she had been holding off for financial reasons but hoped to have a new awning installed by the end of June 2012.

IT WAS MOVED BY STRAUB and supported by FLESZAR to give an extension on the grant of \$195.57 for an awning replacement for 217 W Main until July 1, 2012.

YEA: 3 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED

Item #3 **Old Business.** Chairman Doyle stated that he received a little more information regarding the federal tax credits that were discussed at the last meeting. Since the Historic District is on the National Registry there is a 20% tax credit that can be used for building improvements. The building has to be a depreciable building but can qualify with interior and exterior work. Chairman Doyle commented that when you buy a building you need to do an improvement of 50% of the depreciated value. Once you get your business going you then would look at what the tax liability is and take off the 20% tax credit. Credits can be taken forward as needed. Chairman Doyle stated that this is administered through State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Item #4 **New Business.**

Item #5 **Public Comment.** Councilmember Hall questioned if open neon signs come under the scrutiny of the HDC. It was noted that neon signs have been discussed in the past.

Councilmember Hall questioned where the funds for the HDC come from. Commissioner Straub noted that all money comes from Lowell Area Community Fund.

Councilmember Hall stated that City Manager Mark Howe is working on the purchase of the lot behind the Moose building to expand parking which will happen in hopefully May. There should be some activity then in the 200 E Main block. Councilmember Hall stated he would like to see some of the boarded up window openings replaced with real windows. Commissioner Fleszar noted that request can be made for projects like this which are typically given at 30%. It was noted that several building in that block are for sale.

IT WAS MOVED BY FLESZAR to adjourn at 6:45 pm.

YEA: 3 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 2 MOTION CARRIED

DATE:

APPROVED:

Stephen Doyle, Chairman

Greg Canfield, Vice-Chairman