

**CITY OF MASON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2019**

Clinton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Maple Conference Room 2nd floor at 201 West Ash Street, Mason MI.

Present: Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck
Absent: Vogel
Also present: Elizabeth A. Hude, AICP, Community Development Director

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approve Minutes of Regular Historic District Commission Meeting April 15, 2019

MOTION by Klein second by Schulien, to approve the Historic District Commission meeting minutes from April 15, 2019.

Yes (6) Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck
Absent (1) Vogel
No (0)

MOTION APPROVED

B. Approve Minutes of Historic District Commission Workshop April 15, 2019

MOTION by Klein second by Cummings, to approve the Historic District Commission Workshop minutes from April 15, 2019.

Yes (6) Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck
Absent (1) Vogel
No (0)

MOTION APPROVED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Klein motioned Cummings second, to amend the agenda to include an informal discussion with the Arts Initiative Mason under New Business following item 6.A. Discussion: Maple Street Mall – new mural.

Yes (6) Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck

Absent (1) Vogel

No (0)

MOTION APPROVED

A. Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) - 131 E. Maple St., Steve Sowles on behalf of Mason First Presbyterian Church, is seeking a COA for a new, internally lit, freestanding sign.

Klein motioned Cummings second, to approve a COA for an internally lit sign at 131 E. Maple St.

Yes (6) Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck

Absent (1) Vogel

No (0)

MOTION APPROVED

Discussion:

Representative from Mason First Presbyterian Church provided a description of the proposed sign. The new sign will be lit by four 13-watt bulbs for a total of 27.2 watts per side – an LED strip.

Cummings asked where the bulbs will be located on the sign, his general concern is that lights in the district typically project onto the sign. Mr. Sowles stated that if the light is too bright, a dimmer switch can be applied to the sign to dim the light. The current sign is almost 60 years old and falling apart, he showed a picture of how it looked lit. He thinks with the dimmer switch and the new stone pillars that match the church, the new sign will look much better in the historical district.

Hude asked if the new sign has light projecting down from the top of the sign which would not necessarily be an internally lit sign as the light is not projecting out from inside, but downward from the top. Representative said it will have the light projecting down from the top of the sign and with the dimmer switch it will not be too bright.

Klein motioned Schulien second, to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for one internally lit, freestanding sign located at 131 E. Maple St as submitted on plans received April 11, 2019 based upon the findings that it is consistent with the standards listed in Section 31-5(3) of the Mason Code, specifically:

1. That the property is in the City of Mason Historic District and the property signage has a significant impact on the surrounding area,
2. The proposed sign cabinet will be an internally lit, aluminum and white lexan with vinyl graphics, the supports are made of stone and will be compatible with key historic features of the building such as the stone façade of the church,
3. The sign uses appropriate textures and materials for the historic structure, and
4. The proposed sign will complement and enhance the District.

Yes (5) Clinton, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck
Absent (1) Vogel
No (1) Cummings

MOTION PASSED

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion: Maple Street Mall (MSM) – new mural

Representatives from MSM presented an idea for a mural that would be on the Maple Street Mall that would act as a welcome sign for people driving into Mason along Columbia, Jefferson, and Okemos. The group is interested in working with the city and Mason Public Schools to create a mural that accurately depicts Mason.

Cummings asked if this would be a permanent image or constantly changing. The representatives claimed it would be a one-time event and with the proper paints, it will stand the test of time.

Klein would like to see an accurate representation of the items that are sold within the Maple Street Mall (antiques). A mural that shows antiques and collectables is much better than a mural that just says “Maple Street Mall antiques and collectables”.

Hude informed the commission that staff is currently in the process of looking at the current sign ordinance and they hope to find ways to open up the ordinance and allow businesses to have more creativity when thinking about signs. However, when businesses are involved, the city must be careful about deciding the difference between signs and murals.

Klein told the representatives to look at the Mason jar mural. He explained this mural is real art because the jars are representing an object, it's not an ad.

Representatives asked what their next move should be. Hude said she would like to continue working with the representatives and that they should begin looking at final design ideas along with the logistics of the project. If they are interested in working with the schools, they may have to wait until the fall semester to begin the project due to public school ending relatively soon. Staff will continue working on the sign ordinance to accommodate murals.

B. Discussion: Arts Initiative Mason (AIM) - Mural

Representative explained an idea for a mural done by art students at Commercial bank. The mural would include student representations of past postage stamps in mounted frames on the wall. The frames would be permanent fixtures but the images could be changed out at any time. Representative adds the wall is very broken up by windows and a balcony, but these will be incorporated into the image.

Cummings asked what the expected life span is of the frames and the canvas images within them. The representative claimed the life span is indefinite, the canvas images are rather expensive and should have no issues with snow and rain.

The group of representatives brought a completed building permit application with them and gave it to Hude.

Cummings asked about the timeframe for the project. The representative said they are ready to get started with the project. The images have already been painted by the students and ready to be sent to the canvas signage company.

Hude informed the group that the permit application needs to be reviewed and accepted at the next Historic

District Planning Commission. Representative said that school is ending within the next three weeks and they are hoping to complete the project within this school year.

Cummings asked if student's names will be on the mural to give proper recognition. The representative said there are so many students involved that there would not be enough room to add every name, instead there will be classes listed that helped on the project.

Representative asked the commission if the mural could include Commercial Bank logos (white arrows). Hude said further research must take place before a decision can be made on the logos.

Schulien asked who is in charge of maintenance. The representative confirmed the bank would be in charge of maintenance.

Hude said the city is interested in meeting with the group and making sure that the future sign is content neutral. Each sign goes through an extensive application process and must be accepted at a Historic District Commission meeting.

C. Discussion: Sign Ordinance Update

Hude explained the process of updating the sign ordinance and added that ordinances are usually revised in the fall or winter when staff has more time. Staff would also like to work on creation of design guidelines for signs that are consistent with the community's expectations surrounding Historical District. The design guidelines are not restricted to strictly murals but buildings and materials as well.

D. Regional Planning Workshops for Michigan's Five –Year State Historic Preservation Plan

Hude introduced dates for future workshops that the commissioners may attend to help with the development of the Michigan five-year state historic preservation plan.

E. Recommendation to City Council to adopt Resolution - Supporting the Reinstatement of State Historic Tax Credits Senate Bill 54/House Bill 4100

Klein motioned to approve the resolution, Cummings second.

Yes (6) Clinton, Cummings, Klein, Linsley, Schulien, Shattuck

Absent (1) Vogel

No (0)

MOTION APPROVED

F. Workplan Update: Review HDC three-year goals and update to align with CLG requirements

Hude encouraged the commission to reach out to historic building owners and help further the community's understanding of the importance of the Historic District. Discussion took place on adding goals to the workplan to include CLG requirements for the historic resource inventory project and creation of a GIS map, and the development of design guidelines as recommended in recent trainings.

LIAISON REPORT

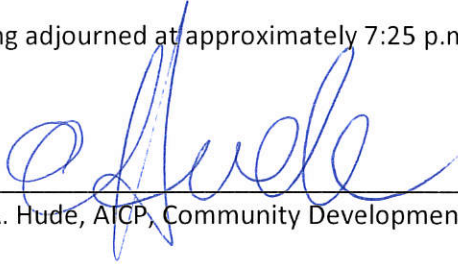
A. Development Update: City Manager's Report

Staff provided the City Manager's Report and gave an overview of the projects listed. Klein noted that he spoke with the City Manager about the 154 W. Maple St. project and that the report indicates the project is still up in the air. Cummings asked if significant changes have been made to the project, there was feedback from SHPO on the proposed building, staff explained it was related to funding, not the architectural plans.

Discussion took place on the upcoming training – Planning and Zoning Essentials. There may also be some training for the chairs and vice-chairs on Roberts Rules.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:25 p.m.



Elizabeth A. Hude, AICP, Community Development Director