DATE: Thursday, September 19, 2019
TIME: 5:30 pm – 7:00pm
PLACE: Eastern County Government Center
Office of Community & Economic Development – 2nd Floor
415 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI

Call to Order – Chair
Roll Call – Secretary

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting – Chair
Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting May 2, 2019 and July 11, 2019 – Chair
Citizen Participation and Commissioner follow-up – Chair

Application Review
• Geer School

Business and Reports
• Staff Report – Melinda Schmidt
  o Local Historic Districts
    o Thornoaks
    o Conant Farm
    o Annual Audits
    o Gordon Hall
  o Programming and Promotional materials
    o Heritage Tours
  o Certified Local Government Program
    o Northfield Township Survey update
  o Washtenaw County Updates
    o Temporary Employee on-boarding process
  o Items for Consideration by Commission
    o Staff approval
    o Site visit subcommittee

• Treasurer Report

Items for Discussion
• Potential Projects
• Commissioner Updates

Adjournment
Next Meeting: Thursday, November 7, 2019 - Washtenaw County Eastern County Government Center

Attachments:
Minutes of the May 2, 2019 Meeting
Minutes of the July 11, 2019 Meeting
Staff Report
Proposed Resolution Delegating Minor Classes of Work for Staff Approval
Resolution Creating Site Visit Subcommittee
COA application Geer School
Call to Order
- Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:30 PM

Roll Call
- Secretary Smith conducted roll call:
  - Commissioners present: Alec Jerome, James Mann, Alice Ralph, Patti Smith, Katie Remensyder, Peter Kelley, Blake Swihart
  - Commissioners absent with notice: Leslie Pinney, Matthew Cook
  - Staff present: Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:
Chair Ralph asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Staff noted the Thornoaks empty lot construction proposal would not take place. Chair Ralph struck it from the agenda. Chair Ralph also moved to review the COA Application before Citizen Participation, since Hopkins Burns had not yet arrived to present on Gordon Hall. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. The agenda as offered passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: March 7, 2019:
Chair Ralph asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. With none, the minutes stand approved.

Application Reviews:
Chair Ralph called the 4101 Thornoaks Drive Application hearing to order. Tom Meadows from Neighborhood Roofing was in attendance to represent the property owner.

- Staff presentation: Staff reviewed the application packet and the history of 4101 Thornoaks Drive. Staff summarized the roof replacement would include installing a white membrane roof and cutting back damaged soffit at the side elevations. Staff explained that though cutting back the soffit would affect a character defining feature, the proposed alternative would be to replace the Douglass fir boards, which run through the entire house. There is no way to simply cut back the soffit boards and replace them, because there is nowhere to anchor the new boards.

- Applicant’s presentation: The applicant summarized the current construction, including the 1.5” tongue and groove Douglas fir beams that create the soffit and interior ceiling; and the built-up asphalt roof still under the current roof system that should be removed when the new roof is installed. This roof system is directly on the roof and is allowing water damage. The asphalt would be removed and insulation installed. The applicant also stated that the property owner is out of the country with no intention to return, and will put the house on the market soon.

- Commissioner feedback:
  - Commissioner Ralph clarified the roof boards run throughout the home. The applicant confirmed, and stated replacement of the entire roof/ceiling system would be necessary to maintain the 2 foot overhang. Chair Ralph expressed concern over the significant change from a 2 foot to 1 foot overhang.
Commissioner Swihart asked if the property owner got a second quote. The applicant stated two people from Neighborhood Roofing had evaluated the property and come to similar conclusions, but no other companies had been consulted.

Commissioner Smith clarified that replacement to maintain the 2 foot overhang would get rid of remaining original materials. The applicant confirmed.

Commissioner Jerome agreed the change in appearance is not insignificant. He asked if it could be cut back less, and new board added in a few places. The applicant agreed this may be possible. Commissioner Jerome suggested adding this language to any proposed motion.

Commissioner Swihart expressed concern about changing a character defining feature, as precedent.

Commissioner Jerome asked the applicant about the kick in the new edge metal and the replacement skylights. The applicant noted the kick is shown in the submitted pictures and would help the water drip off and safeguard the existing materials. The skylights would be replaced with glass lights of the same size to prevent leakage.

Chair Ralph reviewed the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and commissioners agreed Standards 2 and 6 applied to the application.

Staff summarized the conversation, stating that in order to preserve in-tact original materials, the deteriorated portions of the soffit overhang on the southwest and northeast elevations must be cut back. Staff stressed the motion should clarify that the portion cut back should be kept to minimum, between 6” and 12”, and any additional rotted wood that must be removed requires replacement with new Douglas fir.

Commissioner Jerome moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for a roof replacement at 4101 Thornoaks Drive as submitted with pictures, which includes installing 2” rigid insulation over roof boards, installing White 060 mil thick TPO roof system and installing two new skylights; and cutting back damaged soffit (not to exceed 12” to maximize the depth of the overhang on the southwest and northeast elevations), and installing replacement-in-kind Douglas fir where needed and replacement-in-kind edge metal of the same color as the original edge metal; citing the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties 2 and 6.

Commissioner Ralph seconded the motion. Commissioner Jerome discussed the need to emphasize minimal change to the soffit overhang while preserving remaining original materials. He also emphasized any replacement boards should be Douglass fir. With no further discussion, Chair Ralph called a vote. The motion passed unanimously and the Certificate of Appropriateness application for a roof replacement at 4101 Thornoaks Drive was approved as stated above.

Citizen Participation: Hopkins Burns presented on behalf of Dexter Area Historical Society (DAHS) regarding the Interior Rehabilitation plans for Gordon Hall.

- Staff introduction: Staff introduced architects Jessica Quijano and Gene Hopkins from Hopkins Burns and reviewed the intent of the Interior Rehabilitation Plans for Gordon Hall. Staff noted Hopkins Burns would present on interior renovations that would affect the exterior of Gordon Hall and require an application to the HDC. Hopkins Burns is looking for feedback on the plans now in order to adjust to HDC requirements.
- Citizen presentation: Gene Hopkins gave an introduction to the project and Hopkins Burn’s history with Gordon Hall and DAHS. Jessica Quijano reviewed the proposed plans and highlighted the ensuing exterior changes, including reconstruction of two original chimneys; the removal of non-original doors, windows and dormers; and an added accessibility door to the wing.

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: Commissioners expressed appreciation for the presentation and the stewardship of Gordon Hall by DAHS. The commissioners voiced no concerns regarding the presentation.
Business and Reports:

Staff Report:
Due to limited time, staff requested commissioners review the staff report on their own and bring comments to the next meeting. Items for commissioner review and input will be discussed at the next HDC meeting. Staff highlighted a few time-sensitive items:

- Programming and Promotional Updates
  - MHPN will host an HDC workshop on May 6. Staff encouraged commissioners to attend.
- Historic Markers Updates
  - St. John the Baptist Evangelical Lutheran Church will install their replacement Washtenaw County historical marker as part of their 140th anniversary celebrations on June 2, commissioners are welcome to attend.

Treasurer Report: none

Adjournment: Chair Ralph motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:18pm. Commissioner Jerome seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development 2nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes

DATE: Thursday, July 11, 2019
TIME: 5:30 pm-7:00pm
PLACE Eastern County Government Center
Office of Community & Economic Development- 2nd floor
415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI

Call to Order
• Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:30 PM

Roll Call
• Secretary Smith conducted roll call:
  o Commissioners present: Alec Jerome, James Mann, Alice Ralph, Patti Smith, Katie Remensnyder, Peter Kelley, Blake Swihart, Matthew Cook
  o Commissioners absent with notice: Leslie Pinney
  o Staff present: Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:
Chair Ralph had no voice, so delegated chair duties to vice-chair Jerome.
Vice-chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. Staff requested Conant Farm be added to the Local Historic Districts section of the agenda.

Commissioner Kelley motioned to add Conant Farm to the Local Historic Districts section of the agenda. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Vice-chair Jerome called the agenda to a vote. The agenda passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: May 2, 2019:
Vice-chair Jerome noted the May minutes were accidentally left out of the packet, and stated the May minutes will be approved at the September meeting.

Citizen Participation: none

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: none

Application Reviews:
4063 E. Huron River Drive
• Vice-chair Jerome called the 4063 E. Huron River Drive Application hearing to order.
• Staff reviewed the application and summarized the proposed work, which includes a flat system installed correctly using black EPDM rubber and new metal trim that would be a slightly different color as close to the current trim. The current trim was custom painted and new trim would be just a base metal color. The new metal color will be as close to the original as possible.
• Chair Ralph clarified the metal trim will be painted.
• Commissioner Kelley moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for a roof replacement at 4063 E Huron River Drive as submitted with pictures, which includes a flat roof system using black EPDM rubber,
new flashing, and new metal trim as close in color to the original trim as possible; based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 6 and 9.

- Commissioner Mann seconded the motion.
- Commissioner Swihart moved a friendly amendment to amend the motion to read: approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for a roof replacement at 4063 E Huron River Drive as submitted with pictures, which includes a flat roof system using black EPDM rubber, new flashing, and new coated metal trim as close in color to the original trim as possible; based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 6 and 9, with the condition that the new trim color from the standard palate is approved by Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Staff prior to installation.
- The motion was passed unanimously.

**Business and Reports:**

**Staff Report**

Staff Melinda Schmidt updated the Commission on the following items:

- **Local Historic Districts Updates**
  - Annual Audit: Staff has started the annual audit process. Staff will present the findings of the audit at a September Board of Commissioners Working Session.
  - Conant Farm: Conant Farm property owners requested that the HDC visit the farm prior to any applications filed. Hey would like to give a tour of the property, explain their vision for the farm, and discuss the difficulties they are facing as they plan rehabilitation of the many buildings on the property. Specifically, they are having trouble finding available and affordable tradesmen and contractors to lift one of the houses and fix the foundation, finding drainage solutions, and utilizing the buildings as they are. Commissioners agreed visiting Conant Farm would be helpful and support the property owners, and requested specific questions and issue be disseminated before the visit. Staff will send out a poll to establish a visit date in late August, and post the special meeting.

- **Programming and Promotional Updates**
  - Staff distributed promotional brochures to the HDC. Commissioner discussed placing them in township offices, real estate offices, and at local historical societies.
  - Tours: Staff reminded commissioners of the heritage tours postcards available to distribute at local historical and cultural events. Please notify staff if you want some postcards for an event.
  - Washtenaw County Consortium: The Consortium is preparing to promote events county-wide related to the Women’s Suffrage centennial. If you would like to add to the event calendar, notify staff.

- **CLG Updates**
  - Washtenaw County, in partnership with Northfield Township Historical Society, received a CLG grant to complete the reconnaissance level survey of Northfield Township. The project will start in August and continue through September 2020.

- **Items for Consideration of Adoption or Approval by Commission**
  - Staff Approval: Staff and several commissioner attended an MHPN workshop for HDCs in early May. At that training, MHPN suggested HDCs create a resolution defining and approving staff approval in order to expedite some applications. MHPN provided a suggested template for the resolution, which staff edited for the WCHDC’s unique situation. Staff suggests administrative approval for changes to a structure or property that do not significantly impact the site layout or design of a building and provided a draft for commissioners.
    - Commissioner Remensnyder consisted this useful, and recommended striking “or installment” from number 9.
    - Commissioner Ralph recommended adding “dimensions” to numbers 5 and 8.
    - Commissioner Swihart recommended changing “professional” to “certified” on number 7.
- Commissioner Jerome recommended adding “profiles” to number 12.
- Commissioners requested an additional whereas clause that stipulates staff post the application publicly and share with the commission two weeks prior to an expected decision.
- Staff will revise the resolution for the September HDC meeting.
- Site Visit Subcommittee: At the May WCHDC meeting, commissioners expressed interested in creating a site visit sub-committee to join staff at site visits for COA applications. The sub-committee would visit the site and report their findings to the HDC during the application hearing, but cannot discuss any opinion of decision at the site visit or anyplace outside of the application hearing.
  - Commissioner Jerome added that the deliberation during the last COA hearing would have benefitted from a site visit.
  - Commissioner Cook suggested three commissioners serve on the subcommittee.
  - Commissioner Jerome suggested commissioners rotate their service on the subcommittee.
  - Commissioner Ralph noted the rotating subcommittee should take advantage of expertise.
  - Commissioner Jerome moved to create an ad-hoc review subcommittee for application site visits.
  - Commissioner Ralph seconded the motion, and amended to request staff flesh out a resolution creating the subcommittee for the September meeting.
  - The motion passed unanimously.
- Demolition permit: Staff suggested including a public hearing as part of the demolition permit process. Staff has drafted an additional section in the Guidelines for the Consideration of Applications for the Demolition of Structures within Washtenaw County Local Historic Districts. The additional section, entitled “Application Consideration Process,” was approved by commissioners, who considered it an opportunity for the public, including neighbors, to express their thoughts.

Treasurer Report: none

Other Reports: (committees, other) none

Items for Discussion:
- Potential Projects and Commissioner Updates
  Commissioner Smith discussed the Women’s Suffrage in Washtenaw County Tour idea. Historical tours have been successful in Ann Arbor, and she is interested to doing one in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor regarding women’s suffrage. She noted the tour needs to be sensitive to those who did not gain the right to vote at the time of the amendment as well. Commissioner Mann noted that Sojourner Truth spoke for suffrage in Ypsilanti. Commissioner Kelley suggested including worker discrimination against women in Washtenaw County. Commissioner Ralph suggested including Gordon Hall because of its connection to feminist Katherine Dexter McCormick.

Adjournment: Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:33pm. Commissioner Mann seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development 2nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI
Local Historic Districts

- **Thornoaks:**
  - **New Build:** The property owner of the empty lot in the Thornoaks Neighborhood presented preliminary plans for his home informally at the September 5 meeting. Staff and Commissioner Mann gave feedback and suggested the property owner submit a Certificate of Appropriateness Application for the November meeting. Staff and Commissioner Mann will give a full report of his preliminary plans on September 19th.
  - **Library box:** Due to the urgency of the application for the library box, staff, under the direction of the OCED director, gave administrative approval for the proposed lending library box as submitted, which includes a cedar library box with plexiglass door and side walls, an asphalt roof with solar light, and natural stained wood exterior finish; installed next to the existing mailbox and replacing the current Ann Arbor News box; based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 2 and 10.

- **Conant Farm:** Staff and two commissioners visited Conant Farm on August 27. The Hills gave a tour of the farm and highlighted their priorities and needs. The Hills have three top priorities: lift the Conant house and fix the foundation, move the current garage and build a new one that accommodates vehicles, storage space, and a work shop; and barn stabilization including fixing the barn sill plate. Commissioners Jerome and Swihart will give a full report to the Commission in preparation for future applications.

- **Annual Audits:** Staff has completed visits to all historic districts except Thornoaks, which is best done late fall after the leaves fall off the trees. The Annual Audit Report will be presented at the November meeting.

- **Geer School:** The belfry has been repaired and painted.

- **Gordon Hall:** The CLG grant-funded project creating Interior Rehabilitation Plans for Gordon Hall has been completed. The Dexter Area Historical Society hopes to start work in the next few years.

Programming and Promotional Materials

- **Heritage Tours:** The Preservation program has postcards promoting the Storymap tours and smartphone tours available for distribution at local historical or cultural events. We also have hardcopies of some of the tours. Please notify staff if you would like some postcards to distribute at an event.

Certified Local Government Program

- **Northfield Township Reconnaissance Level Survey:** Northfield Township Historical Society, Washtenaw County, and SHPO kicked off the survey project at a meeting mid-August. The RFP for the survey report was released on September 1, and will close on September 30. Please share with any local qualified consultants who may be interested.

Washtenaw County Updates

- **Temporary Employee on-boarding process:** Thanks to everyone who has completed the onboarding paperwork. **If you have not already, please bring your identification for the I-9 form and direct deposit information** with you to the September 19 meeting so we can process everyone’s onboarding paperwork.

Items for Consideration by Commission

- **Staff Approval:** Staff revised the proposed Resolution Delegating Minor Classes of Work for Staff Approval based on the suggested edits of commission members at the July meeting. It is attached to this report.

- **Site visit subcommittee:** At the July HDC meeting, commissioners requested staff draft a resolution creating a site visit subcommittee for COA applications. The draft resolution is attached to this report for consideration.

Commissioner Project Ideas and Updates:

Please come prepared with any project ideas you would like to share with the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Schmidt
Historic Preservation Specialist, Office of Community & Economic Development
(734) 544-2954 schmidtm@washtenaw.org
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Resolution Delegating Minor Classes of Work for Staff Approval

Whereas, Michigan’s Local Historic District Act, being MCL 399.205(10), authorizes the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission (WCHDC) to “delegate the issuance of certificates of appropriateness for specified minor classes of work to its staff,” and “the commission shall provide to the delegated authority specific written standards for issuing certificates of appropriateness”; and

Whereas, the Washtenaw County Historic Preservation Ordinance authorizes the WCHDC to “delegate the issuance of certificates of appropriateness for specified minor classes of work to its staff,” and “the commission shall provide to the delegated authority specific written standards for issuing certificates of appropriateness”; and

Whereas, staff will publicly post the application two weeks prior to expected issuance of staff decision, providing commissioners an opportunity to request the application be considered by the WCHDC at the next scheduled meeting;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, the WCHDC defines the following activities as “minor classes of work” which may be approved by Commission Staff:

1. Replacement of signage provided that the new sign fits within an existing frame or replaces a sign in the exact location and size of the existing sign.
2. Storm window and/or door installation provided that: 1) mullions, muntins, and meeting rails of storm windows conform with those of the prime windows; 2) the design of the storm door reflects the design of the prime door; 3) if aluminum is used, that the color match the trim, door, or window color.
3. Antenna and satellite dish installation provided that: the dish or antenna is not visible from the street.
4. Replacement of existing fencing provided that: the fence is in the same location; is the same height; and is the same design and materials.
5. Reconstruction of existing porches or decks provided that: 1) the design, size, dimensions, and materials match the design and materials of the existing porch.
6. Installation of glass blocks to replace basement windows provided that: 1) the glass block is recessed in the opening to the location of the existing window; 2) screening or grates are installed on the exterior to cover the glass block; 3) the windows are no larger than 36” wide and 24” high; and 4) the windows are located on the sides and rear of the property.
7. Removal of dead, diseased, or damaged trees included in a local historic district provided that: a written statement by a certified arborist is provided documenting the condition and that the trees are not savable, or it is an emergency situation as determined by the building official.
8. Replacement of a sidewalk or driveway provided that: the size, dimensions, materials, and location match the existing.
9. Replacement of gutters and downspouts.
10. Replacement of roofs provided that: the materials and roofline match the existing.
11. Repair or rebuild of chimneys provided that: the materials, size, and massing match the existing.
12. Repair of siding or trim with materials and profiles that match the existing.
13. Minor changes to already-approved applications.

Alice Ralph, HDC Chair

Date
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Resolution Establishing a Certificate of Appropriateness Application Site Visit Subcommittee

Whereas, Michigan’s Local Historic District Act, being MCL 399.205(10), authorizes the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission (WCHDC) to “adopt its own rules of procedure…to carry out its duties under this act;” and

Whereas, the Washtenaw County Historic Preservation Ordinance authorizes the WCHDC to “adopt its own rules of procedure...to carry out its duties under this act;” and

Whereas, the WCHDC has decided that a Certificate of Appropriateness Application Site Visit Subcommittee would help the WCHDC better consider Certificate of Appropriateness Applications;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, the WCHDC establishes and defines a Certificate of Appropriateness Application Site Visit Subcommittee (Subcommittee) as the following:

1. Three commissioners shall serve on the Subcommittee at a time; the commissioners serving on the Subcommittee shall rotate quarterly throughout the year. If a commissioner is unavailable to attend a site visit, staff shall assist the commissioner to find a substitute.

2. Staff shall organize a site visit with the property owner and the Subcommittee after a complete Certificate of Appropriateness Application has been received.

3. The Subcommittee shall review the application and prepare any questions for the property owner.

4. The Subcommittee shall not discuss application decisions at the site visit, before the site visit, or after the site visit. The Subcommittee shall only discuss application decisions at the Historic District Commission meeting at which the application hearing is held.

5. At the application hearing, the Subcommittee shall share pertinent observations regarding architectural features, integrity of the structure, and needed clarifications. The Subcommittee shall not share any unnecessary observations regarding the applicant or items unrelated to the application.

Alice Ralph, HDC Chair

Date
COA Application Review Packet

Historic District       Geer School
Name of Owner          Plymouth Canton Community Schools
Phone Number           734-416-2970
Name of Applicant      Mike Peterson
Email address          Michael.peterson@pccsk12.com
Address of Property    9981 West Ann Arbor Road, Superior Township, MI

Why is the property important?

The Geer School was named after first school director, William Geer. It was actively used from 1880 to 1982. The site is currently owned by Plymouth-Canton Community Schools (PCCS) and hosts multiple children’s activities throughout the year.

Summary of proposed work (from applicant): The current front doors are rotting, and need to be replaced. They cannot be patched. The front doors are not original. The proposed replacement doors will match the existing and would be mahogany wood painted white. They should last a long time.

Effect of work on integrity of character defining features?

The building has good integrity, however the current set of front doors is not original. The proposed replacements are wooden doors of a similar design to the current doors. This project would have no negative impact on the character of the building.

Staff notes:

Date of site visit: August 13, 2019 Pertinent observations: The doors have several holes and extensive patching

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation applicable:

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Proposed motion:

Approve: “...move to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for front door replacement at Geer School as submitted with plans, which includes mahogany wood doors of the same design painted white; based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 6 and 9.”

Attachments:

Photos of current doors
Proposed exterior doors drawing
Geer School front doors

Right door detail