



HIGHLAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Robert B. Blackwell Municipal Building
12050 Woodward Avenue
Highland Park, Michigan 48203
Chairwoman A. Zobel

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION (HDC) MEETING (ZOOM Meeting) Monday, 26 October 2020 OFFICIAL MINUTES

Call to Order at 5:43

The meeting was hosted by Tiffany Tiley via Zoom and called to order by Chair Zobel.

Commissioners Present: Anne Zobel - Chair, Commissioner Arthur Williams, Commissioner Art Rizzo, Commissioner Debbie Morrison

Commissioners Absent: none.

Others Present: CED Director Tiffany Tiley, Commission Applicant Malika Pryor, Invited guest James ("Jim") Hamilton – Detroit Historic District Chair, and Boston Edison Development, Inc. President.

A motion to approve the September 26th, 2020 HDC Meeting Minutes was moved by Commissioner Art Rizzo and seconded by Commissioner Morrison. The motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Zobel began the meeting by thanking guests for participating and asking everyone to introduce themselves and their connection to historic district activities.

REPORT FROM COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CED) DIRECTOR –

Ms. Tiley did not have any updates specific to the historic districts but did provide the following general updates.

- The City is giving away food boxes every Wednesday at the Recreation Center at 10 Pitkin.
- CED is creating new development intake process and procedures. They will be instituting a web-based intake program that will manage all development activity ranging from land purchase requests to larger development projects. The system will track comments, status updates and the approval process.

HISTORIC FORD BUILDING DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT 2020 PLAN OF ACTION –

Chair Zobel brought up social media piece that spoke to the Ford Family's interest in the remaining building on the campus. Commissioner Rizzo stated he will find piece and share with commissioners.



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EXPANDING THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION TO INCLUDE HISTORIC DISTRICT STREETS

Chair Zobel introduced Jim Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton serves as the chair of the Detroit Historic District Commission and is also the president of the BEDI. Jim has lived on Longfellow Street for 40 years.

A robust discussion ensued regarding the ins and outs of overseeing local historic districts. was had. Mr. Hamilton outlined key motivations including:

- Promoting Historic Preservation goals to recognize and preserve historic resources
- Increase market values - research is well documented to show that homes in LHDs maintain and increase in value better than comparable homes in non-LHD.

He described so caveats to success that he has experienced in his tenure in Detroit including:

- Recognizing that declaring a district doesn't achieve the goals, but establishing and following design standards does.
- Working with properties owners in a reasonable way is the "work" that makes it worthwhile.

Ms. Pryor asked Mr. Hamilton "What do resident want or need most that can be provided through the districts"? He responded that the "How to's" and "Who can do" are the often that greatest need in regard to maintaining and improving their homes. Property owners typically want to do the right thing they just need resources and guidance. He said the City of Detroit has come a long way in this area, but more web-based resources would be helpful. For instance –updated lists of vetted contractors. Also "do it yourself" instructions on window restoration can help save money. Almost anyone can restore historic windows with a little training.

Mr. Hamilton spoke about the challenges to designation. Districts should meet certain thresholds of historic integrity to be designated. The state enabling legislation as interpreted by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (M-SHPO) establishes standards to be met.

He explained that Detroit is unique and has a separate Historic Designation Advisory Board that completes studies and makes recommendations to City Council. In Highland Park's case, the HDC could commission the study and prepare for City council approval. This work should take place in concert with M-SHPO.



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Ms. Pryor asked about Community Buy In and how do you get residents to comply with standards. And what are typically the biggest challenges.

Mr. Hamilton responded that you have to begin by dispelling myth that there are grant dollars available. He said the State Historic Tax Credit may be reinstated but it's really only lucrative for large scale rehabs.

He said the 2 biggest challenges are:

- Property Rights argument. Some people feel that the ordinance is an infringement on their individual property rights. This can be countered with the benefits of historic preservation and having a uniform character. Remind property owners that it is a code that is to be followed for the greater good and everyone's property values will increase as a result.
- Concerns about high cost of adhering with design requirements. This can be countered with fact the most guidance involves color choices that don't impact costs. For instance, selecting roof and paint colors that are consistent with local history and character. Also the commission can provide guidance on intermediate steps to "make do" on items that are cost prohibitive. For instance, repairing wood siding on installing storm window to protect historic windows rather than doing replacement windows.

NOMINATIONS TO FILL VACANT HDC CHAIRS

Chair Zobel shared that Ms. Tilley has forwarded Ms. Pryor's biography to City Council. And that the terms for Pryor, Harris and Zobel will be sent forward for November 16 City Council agenda. Chair Zobel shared that she hasn't yet identified a candidate to fill remaining vacant seat. Commissioner Morrison said she has a neighbor that she will discuss with and potentially recommend.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:48PM

Next meeting will take place on Monday, November 23, 2020. No meeting will take place in December.