

Landmarks Commission
August 23, 2017
Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:50PM. The following members were present: Mr. David Miller, Mr. Jim Jackson, Mr. Pete McGory, Chairman Michael Zuilhof, Mr. Conor Whelan, Mr. Joe Galea and Mr. Wes Poole. Ms. Casey Sparks and Ms. Angela Byington represented the Planning Department; Mr. Justin Harris represented the Law Department and Debi Eversole, Clerk from the Community Development Department.

Mr. McGory moved to approve the minutes from the 4/26/17 meeting. Mr. Galea seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes from the 7/26/17 meeting. Mr. Poole seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Ms. Sparks presented Jeff Foster, on behalf of Shoreline Building LLC has submitted an application for exterior alterations to the property located at **225 Water Street**, which is noted on the application as **222 Shoreline Drive**. The Chairman asked that the address 225 **West** Water Street be entered for the record. Ms. Sparks stated that the property is zoned as Downtown Business, within the Central Business District. The property is located within the National Register district, as such exterior renovations are required to be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission. The applicant has applied to remove and replace all of the existing windows. The application includes a full unit replacement with historically accurate, aluminum clad, wood windows with insulated glass. The applicant has indicated that the aluminum clad would be of a hemlock color. The ground level storefront entrance along Water Street will be painted including doors and framing. The cladding above the entrance doors along Shoreline Drive will be replaced with painted fiber cement. The previous owner did make some effort through the Design Review Committee to repair and replace some of the windows at this existing facility, however some of the windows were replaced with vinyl. The current owner has made a clear effort to preserve the historic character of the building while providing an upgrade. Staff would recommend approval of the proposed alterations to the building. Ms. Sparks stated that the applicant is present to answer any questions the Commission may have for him.

Mr. McGory moved to approve the application as submitted. With a lack of a second, the motion died.

Jeff Foster, Payto Architects 1220 West Sixth Street, Cleveland indicated that it would be a full replacement of the windows and that the previous owner did replace some of the windows with a vinyl replacement because the wood had deteriorated. Mr. Foster said that he is bidding out to 4 different contractors to do the full replacement and showed a sample to the Commission.

Mr. Poole asked what drove the applicant to replace what had previously been fixed by the prior owner. Mr. Foster stated that because the wood is deteriorated, the windows are leaking. Mr. Poole asked for comments regarding the outcome long term since the work deviated from the standard landmark historical requirements. Mr. Foster stated that the work that was done by the previous owner did not compromise the historical integrity. They can bring back the historical characteristics of the building. Mr. Poole asked if Mr. Foster had any experience with owners that did not follow the guidelines for historical buildings. Mr. Foster stated that the local tax credits are a major incentive that the building owners and surrounding properties should always keep in mind.

Mr. McGory asked if the arched windows will stay intact. Mr. Foster stated that they will find a window that will be inserted into the original archway frame.

Mr. Poole moved to approve the application. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion, which carried with a unanimous vote. Mr. Poole thanked Mr. Foster for his investment and that the Community will benefit from this project.

Ms. Sparks presented that Leisa Oakes-Davis has submitted an application for exterior alterations to the building located at **126 Columbus Avenue**. The property is located within the Central Business District and is zoned Downtown Business. The property is also located within the National Register district, as such, exterior renovations are required to be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission.

The applicant is requesting alterations to the rooftop. This would include the following:

- Cut opening in roof to accommodate new stairway and provide structural reinforcement as required
- Install new steel stairs and modify rail at the landing of the existing stairway
- Construct a new roof structure that is approximately 5' x10' long. The structure will be wood framed with vinyl siding and a sloped roof with asphalt shingles.

The applicant has applied for Economic Development funds for the exterior and interior repairs to the building. They have indicated that they would like to take full advantage of the views within the area. Staff would recommend approval of the alterations for the exterior of the building. The proposed alterations will not impact the historical character of the building. Ms. Sparks indicated that there was a similar application that came through the Landmarks Commission last month that was approved. She also stated that the applicant could not make the meeting tonight as they are out of town.

Mr. Miller asked if Ms. Sparks knew the intended use of the deck. Ms. Sparks stated that it would be for personal use and a viewing area. The applicant did not indicate whether there would be furniture or landscaping there. Chairman Zuilhof asked if the plan was recessed enough that you would not see from the street. Ms. Sparks indicated that the setback could be included as a condition within the motion.

Mr. Whelan asked that if the Commission approved the application, would the setback have to be what is indicated in the drawing or could they change the plan? Chairman Zuilhof stated that his understanding is that they would have to comply with what they submitted within the drawing. Staff could approve minor alterations at Staff level, but anything major would come back before the Commission. Ms. Sparks stated that Ms. Byington stated that it may be beneficial to move the structure ½ way back so that it would be more in the middle of the building. Mr. Poole asked if the structure should be moved if it is not viewed from the street anyway. Ms. Sparks stated that if it is clear within the motion that the structure not been seen from the street, the applicant would have to abide by that condition.

Sharon Tresk, Marous Brothers Construction indicated that it is common practice that if the property is within a block, you would go to the nearest intersection from the furthest vantage points. If you can't see the rooftop structure from the intersection vantage points or the street, it is ok.

Mr. Poole indicated that it appears that this application is being singled out for standards that don't exist within our ordinance and that other applications have not had to abide by certain conditions. What is the standard practice? Ms. Tresk stated that if it is within the National Registry, it would have to abide by the National Parks Service guidelines. Mr. Zuilhof stated that the ordinance states that applications must conform to the National Parks Service guidelines.

Mr. Whelan moved to approve the application as written. Mr. Poole seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Chairman Zuilhof requested to hear item #5 next. Ms. Sparks presented that Chris Parthemore has submitted an application for exterior alterations to Sandusky State Theatre, located at **107 Columbus Avenue**. The

property is zoned as Downtown Business and is listed on the National Register district, as such, exterior renovations are required to be reviewed by Landmarks Commission. The application is to repaint a small section of western side of the building for a mural. The mural will be 30' x17' depicting scenes from Sandusky area. Staff believes the proposed alterations will protect and enhance the exterior of the property. It is important to know that this exterior wall has already been painted. This mural will be the initial pilot project for increasing public art that we will ideally see city wide in the coming years. This project also is in conjunction with our bicentennial year and staff believes that this is an appropriate way to celebrate the historic nature of the building and Sandusky. Staff has recommended approval and has provided comments to the artist in regards to the background colors being more historically appropriate and some minor to the proposed images. McKenzie Spriggs, representing our Bicentennial Commission and Chris Parthemore from Sandusky State Theatre are her on behalf of the application.

Mr. Poole asked what Landmark regulation applies to the application. Ms. Byington stated that the application is an artistic element to the building. Since the wall where the proposed mural will be placed has already been painted, there will be no change or alteration with the historic character of the building. The Secretary of Interior Standards states that you should not paint a building and since this one has already been painted, it is allowed to repaint for maintenance purposes. The color recommendations within the Secretary of Interior Standards are for facade, trim and windows, not an artistic element that is added on to the building. This will not change the historic character of the building and can be painted over at any time.

Chairman Zuilhof stated that this appears to be more of a sign or billboard to him rather than a mural. Is the sign ordinance in effect in this case? Ms. Byington stated that Staff does not consider this a sign or billboard, but an artistic element to the building. Mr. McGory asked if this mural will be changed on a monthly basis or painted once and left. Ms. Byington stated that the intent would be on a long-term basis. Chairman Zuilhof stated that if it were proposed to be changed, it would come again through Landmarks Commission.

Mr. Poole asked for clarity on the description of signs and billboards. Ms. Byington stated that a billboard is defined as off-premises advertising. Ms. Sparks recited section 1143.02 of the Zoning Code stating that:

- Any writing, pictorial representation, illustration, emblem, symbol, design, or other figure or similar character that is a structure or a part thereof, or is attached to or in any manner represented on a building, vehicle, or other structure, and is visible from any public right-of-way or any other lot or parcel, and is used for purposes of advertisement, announcement, declaration, demonstration, identification or expression

Mr. Galea and Mr. McGory stated that they feel that using this definition, the project seems like it is a sign. Ms. Byington stated that Staff would have to look at the dimensions and the project may require a variance. She added that she is not aware of regulations for a mural.

McKenzie Spriggs, Bicentennial Coordinator for the City of Sandusky stated that the Greetings from Sandusky mural is intended to be an artistic element to the building. The Bicentennial Committee all agreed to prioritize city-wide beautification. Public Art was set aside in 2 sections of the Bicentennial Vision as a priority.

- Destination City describes utilizing public art as a lasting legacy. Work with local foundations to put together a public art program for the Bicentennial that includes neighborhood and the waterfront that utilizes murals and lighting elements to enhance and add a public art legacy.
- Celebrated City describes utilizing public art as a legacy project to complete lasting community improvements to neighborhood parks, public art and the waterfront.

Chris Parthemore, Director of Sandusky State Theatre stated that there are a lot of advantages to this project. One is marketing, particularly on social media. The "Greetings From ..." murals are all over the United States and people use these for photos opportunities and tag them on social media. He added that the wall space is

currently not being utilized and he is not in favor of the current paint on the wall. The State Theatre Board voted unanimously to approval putting the mural on that underutilized wall. They believe that being influential in the Art Community of all Erie County, it is important in being a leader in this Public Art initiative. Mr. Parthemore continued to say that the photos that have been provided this evening are examples of other cities and that the artist is currently making changes to Sandusky's art.

Mr. Poole likes the idea of murals and public art within the community and that the content is not what really matters. He wonders if it has been determined if this would be considered a sign or a mural. Mr. Harris stated that if it is a sign, that would be a zoning issue and is not part of the Landmarks Commission decision process. The Landmarks Commission is to determine if this public art conforms to the Landmarks Ordinance.

Mr. McGory stated that while he appreciates the concept and supports artists, this particular design looks cheap in nature. He feels that something like faux columns and archways that would make it look like the wall were part of a coliseum rather than what appears to be a billboard, with colors that scream out at you.

Mr. Jackson stated that he feels that the purpose of this is to highlight the values of Sandusky and show them to the public and tourists. Ms. Spriggs stated that this was only a first draft of what was given to them to highlight the assets in the historic downtown area, waterfront, parks, etc. The colors as well as content may be changed prior to painting. The interpretation is still being approved with the artist.

Mr. Galea stated that the guidelines for Certificate of Appropriateness follow the Department of Interior Standards and wondered if the Department of Interior Standards speaks in any fashion with what the Sandusky City Zoning Code defines as a sign. If the Commission grants a Certificate of Appropriateness for this mural, going on an already painted structure, will this open up for other properties to apply to have a painted sign on their building stating artist merit and not a commercial aspect and then citing the State Theatre for the mural after Landmarks approval.

Chairman Zuilhof wondered if it is determined that the mural is considered a sign, would a Certificate of Appropriateness even be necessary. Mr. Harris stated that Certificate of Appropriateness for signs are approved at staff level.

Ms. Sparks stated that the historic nature of the building will not be compromised. That proposed portion of the building has already been painted and the mural will be painted over that.

Mr. Poole stated that he is in favor of murals. However, this sign, whether the building is already painted or not, is being considered on a landmarked building and we are being asked to approve the nature of the mural. He stated that he is not prepared to vote on a conventional design.

Mr. McGory stated that since this is part of the Landmarks Commission, he felt that the overall concept is that to try to make the area classy and historical area. If the goal is to just add something to a flat wall, he stated that he felt a more appropriate art concept would be maybe a street scene with silhouettes of people enjoying the downtown area. He does not feel good about having a bright colored billboard in the downtown historic area. It would be better in an area outside the landmarks district.

Mr. Miller stated that he has full appreciation of the historic character of the downtown district. He stated that he understands that this photo opportunity is something that the kids do now and he doesn't think that there will be any permanent degradation to this particular wall that is modern brick and that is a new addition to the building. He added that if you paint it and don't like it, you can repaint over it.

Mr. Whelan wondered if the Landmarks standards has a definition regarding signs. Mr. Harris deferred to Sharon Trsek with Marous Brothers Construction. She stated that if it had historic signage on the facade, you can put new signage on that facade in a similar location. As long as the historic architecture is preserved, there should not be an issue. This seems easily reversible. Mr. Whelan stated that the job of the commission not to approve what they like, it is to protect the historic integrity of the buildings in the district.

Mr. Poole stated that he is not comfortable voting on a conceptual drawing where he does not know if the design will change or if bright colors will be used that may not be appropriate.

Mr. Parthamore stated that the State Theatre Board voted unanimously for the mural because it was not an abstract drawing. It is not open to interpretations or opinions. This is something that is all over the country. He further stated that the wall was added in 2005 and the paint is scheduled for repainting in the spring regardless if it is a mural or not. He added that he was not sure if the fact that the particular wall was an addition in 2005 mattered or not. The wall is not the original historic façade.

Ms. Byington stated that Staff was not aware that this wall was part of an addition but the fact that it is attached to a historic building means that it has to come through the process. You may view what's going on with the addition differently than if it was going on the original façade.

Mr. Miller moved to approve the application. Mr. Whelan seconded the motion. Mr. Miller agrees that the commission has concern and interest about color and images. He stated that he believed that prior to about 1890 or within that era, paint was not dull and boring. Houses were natural wood with yellows and reds, much brighter pigments. He felt that buildings do not have to be kept boring to remain historical. Ms. Trsek stated that color palette in which Mr. Miller referenced would be for the surface of a building, not specific signage or art.

Mr. Poole stated that since Mr. Parthamore stated that the building was scheduled to be repainted in the spring, we have time to deal with the questions and concerns. He is not comfortable approving this application without knowing what it will look like. The colors used on this building will be what others may see as guidelines. The color and images selected will all impact downtown.

Mr. Poole asked the applicant if they could bring this back at a later time with a more definite version of what the mural will look like. Ms. Spriggs stated that the artist is scheduled to be here September 17, 2017 and will not be back until 2019. Sandusky's dates with the artist are September 17 – 26, 2017.

Mr. Galea moved to call the question. Hearing no second, Mr. McGory stated that whatever happens, the wall can always be painted over. Whatever goes on the wall does not have to be forever.

Mr. Miller stated that this proposal has unanimous endorsement through the board of the Sandusky State Theatre.

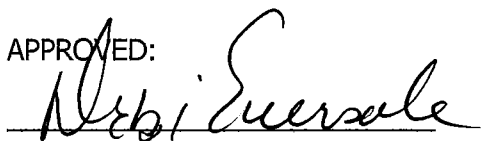
With no further discussion, roll was called on the motion and second to approve the application. The motion carried with a 4/3 vote; Mr. McGory, Mr. Zuilhof and Mr. Poole voting no.

Ms. Sparks excused herself from the meeting. Ms. Byington will present the next item.

Mr. Poole moved to approve the next item on the agenda (historic district expansion within the central downtown area). Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. With no discussion, the application was approved with a unanimous vote.

Mr. McGory moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Galea seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:12PM.

APPROVED:



Debi Eversole, Clerk



Michael Zuilhof, Chairman