

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING AUGUST 13, 2007

The Van Buren Historic District Commission held its monthly meeting Thursday, August 9, 2007 at 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Room of the Municipal Complex. The following items were on the agenda:

1. Approval of minutes from last month's meeting
2. COA for painting building at 9 North 7th Street, for Jane Fisher
3. COA for signage for 617 Main Street, represented by Brandy Merechka
4. COA for signage for 621 Main Street, represented by Terry Ray and Pat Firestine
5. Discussion on new COA form
6. Any other business that comes before the Commission

First item for approval by the Commission was minutes from last meeting. A motion was made by Jody Rhoads to approve minutes as written, and Vickie Davis gave the motion a second. The motion carried with a unanimous decision.

The first Certificate of Appropriateness was for signage for 621 Main Street. After some discussion, which included that the colors for this signage would be Tweed and Phantom Mist, with the letters being Antiques Bold, and no white would be used, a motion was made by John Symonds that this signage doesn't significantly affect the surrounding buildings. Paul Gibson gave this motion a second, and the motion carried with a unanimous decision. A motion was made by John Symonds to approve this COA with the additional notes made herein, the motion was seconded by Jody Rhoads, and the motion carried with a unanimous decision.

Next item for review was Certificate of Appropriateness for painting at 9 North 7th Street for Jane Fisher at Rowe Bookkeeping. The colors to be used were previously approved for Richard Gilstrap's building at 700 East Main Street, which includes Farmhouse Ochre, Plum Island, and Winter Balsam, all from HDC paint charts. The Commission waived the first motion process, as this building will be painted to match the building it is attached to that faces Main Street. A motion was made by Vickie Davis to accept this COA as written, a second was give by Jody Rhoads, and the motion carried with a unanimous decision.

The next Certificate of Appropriateness was for signage at 617 Main Street for Funky Monkeys children's clothing store, represented by Sherry Hays. After some discussion, a motion was made by John Symonds that this signage doesn't affect the surrounding buildings, and the motion was given a second by Jody Rhoads. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. John Symonds then made a motion to approve this COA, and Vickie Davis gave the motion a second, and the motion carried with a unanimous decision, with the understanding that all paint, on windows, doors and on the chain to hold the hanging sign, as well as lettering on the hanging sign, will be a matte finish. The colors for the signage include: Beeswax, Coral Blush, Lush Rose, Venetian Glass, Ash Essence and Biloxi Blue.

At this time, Chairman Dwight Hopkins brought before the Commission additional items that were as follows:

1. Training opportunities for this year and next year
2. By-laws
3. Need to update ordinance
 - a. Staff approval of COA
4. Need to update guidelines
5. Schedule meeting to discuss Maintenance Ordinance with property owners
6. Real Estate signs in the district
7. Information packets at time of Business License/Water turn on
 - a. Signed form stating they have received information?

Chairman Hopkins commented that the new COA form, changes to the guidelines, and a set of by-laws were some of the things that the Commission was going to have to sit down and get to work on. Mr. Hopkins went on to say that he hopes to have enough comments and input from the Commission that later in the year the Commission can vote to change the ordinance, adopt by-laws, adopt a new COA form, as a sweeping change. Chairman Hopkins commented that all this could be done at once, if the Commission sits down in an Executive Session, or at a retreat, and makes these decisions. After some discussion, John Symonds commented one thing needing to change was the size of scale on the new COA form, as size would depend on several factors, such as how much property, etc., and changing that to "at appropriate scale" might work better, to which the Commission agreed. Penalties were the next thing mentioned, and Jody Rhoads commented this would be good. Paul Gibson asked who would be handling this, and Dwight Hopkins commented Code Enforcement would handle. He also commented these penalties have been in place since the District came in existence, but have never been

enforced, and he understands now we have that enforcement with the new administration. Chairman Hopkins commented that through Brad Baldwin's office, a letter would go out notifying property owner(s) of violation of the City Ordinance for the Historic District. If the property owner doesn't act on this notification to correct violation, then HDC assistant, through Brad Baldwin's office, turns it over to Code Enforcement, and they contact the property owner about said violation. Code Enforcement will give them time to remedy the situation and comply, or fine them if they see fit, as the Commission does not have control over that area. Another issue discussed was the capability of filing for a hardship clause that can be filed by a property owner, which is a state law. Mr. Hopkins commented once again that the City has never backed the Commission up on violations/penalties, and now his understanding is the City will back the Commission up.

Chairman Hopkins and the Commission then discussed training for Commissioners. It is mandatory that a commissioner attends training once a year, and Chairman Hopkins suggested, along with Vickie Davis, that the Commission attend the Conference/CAMP in November, and at this conference, hold a retreat for our local Commissioners to take care of the items they need to address. It was discussed and agreed by the Commissioners to commit to attending this conference, with the exception of Paul Gibson, who did not commit to attending at this time. Mr. Hopkins also commented that November 8th would be the CAMP day, the training for the Commissioners, and that was the day most needed to attend. The Commission decided it would be best to travel to conference a day early and hold a retreat. HDC Assistant Cami Brown agreed to check with Boyd Mahar about a room for the Commissioners to meet in to hold a retreat during this visit. At this time Chairman Hopkins mentioned the fact that he had been contacted by the Mayor about meeting with property owners in the Historic District, and he is waiting to hear back as to exactly who wanted to meet with him, and when, and will keep the Commission informed, so they might set a time and place to meet with these individuals.

Next discussion was about real estate signs that are in the Historic District but not in compliance with District Guidelines. Chairman Hopkins asked the Commission to be thinking about this, is it something the Commission needs to address, or just leave as it is. John Symonds commented this is something that is not addressed in the guidelines, and the Commission may want to address this and add it to the guidelines.

Next for discussion was information packets, and getting the HDC guidelines information to merchants and new property owners in the district. One suggestion was asking the City Clerk's office to ask new business license applicant if they are in district, and give them a handout, or refer to HDC office to pick up literature. One suggestion was to get a signature from the applicant stating they had in fact received this information, possibly having them sign such a statement and filing it with their business license information. Chairman Hopkins commented he would like to take this one step further, and take literature to real estate companies, closing companies and get info to individuals purchasing property that way, also.

Chairman Hopkins shared some information about El Dorado in a power point presentation with the Commission, and discussed the quarterly meeting attended by Chairman Hopkins and Cami Brown in El Dorado.

At this time this meeting was adjourned.

Dwight Hopkins, Chairman

Cami L. Brown, Rec. Sec.