

Landmark Commission
June 28th, 2018
Meeting Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:31PM. The following members were present: Mr. John Lawrence, Mr. Timothy Berkey, Chairman Michael Zuilhof, Mr. Alan Griffiths, and Mr. Joe Galea. Mr. Greg Voltz and Ms. Angela Byington represented the Planning Department; Mr. Trevor Hayberger represented the Law Department; and Casey Sparks, Clerk from the Community Development Department. Ms. Nikki Llyod was absent. There were 5 voting members present.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that the applicant, Jan Smith Wood on behalf of Grace Episcopal Church, has applied for approval of digital message board sign to be located at 315 Wayne Street. The Planning Commission has recently approved a Conditional Use permit to allow the digital message board sign at the site.

Mr. Voltz presented that the applicant Jan Smith Wood, on behalf of Grace Episcopal Church has applied for approval of a digital message board sign to be located at 315 Wayne Street. The applicant is proposing to replace the current message board sign, but maintain the surrounding freestanding posts and upper portion. The property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic places. Mr. Voltz stated that staff does recognize that the sign does not fit into the historic character of the building and the surrounding area, however it is important to note that it would be freestanding and would not be placed directly on the historic building, nor would it be larger than the existing sign.

Staff recommends denial due to the fact that the sign would not be appropriate due to the historic nature of the building, adjacent buildings, and adjacent parks.

Mr. Zuilhof ask if the sign is of an age that it would be a contributing feature of the historic nature of the property.

Mr. Voltz stated that he is not aware when it was constructed.

Ms. Jan Wood Smith stated that the sign has been there awhile, however she is not aware of when it was constructed.

Mr. Bob Shaffer stated that he believes the sign was there when the property received the historic designation. The message board will be the only thing that is to be replaced, the structure of the sign is to remain the same.

Mr. Griffiths asked staff if they were aware of any other electronic message board signage on historical buildings.

Ms. Byington stated that electronic message board signs have been granted for other churches, however she is not aware if these churches are individually listed as historic places.

Mr. Voltz stated that he was aware that there are electronic signs on other buildings.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that Daly's has electronic features, however it was a neon sign. The Nazarene church that is located within the old IAB club also has a digital message board signage, and the church on Columbus and Perkins Avenue have been approved for a conditional use permit. Mr. Zuilhof stated that he did look up the regulations and the ODOT regulations state digital message board signs shall only change a message every eight seconds.

Mr. Giffith asked what the signage will be utilized for, community outreach, etc.

Ms. Jan Smith Wood, 315 Wayne Street, stated that Board at the church has deliberated for a while on the proposed sign before submitting the application. The sigh will have a small pixel

but will still be able to change the information on the sign. The Board has indicated that there would be no pictures and it would not be flashy. The sign will advertise activities and ministries of the church.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that staff has to recommend against the application, however this Board has allowed some lenience on other issues. It appears that the applicant is sensitive to many of the issues that could be associated with a digital message board signage.

Mr. Griffiths stated that it appears that a precedent may be set with approval of this application. He does believe that the future is electronic message board signage, Mr. Griffith ask staff is it possible to provide guidance around using this type of sign.

Ms. Byington stated that we do have regulations covered through the zoning code, applicants are to receive a Conditional Use permit process. The Planning Commission can utilize conditions of approval to be more regulatory. If the Landmark Commission is inclined to approve the application it is important to note that the signage may not have been there when the property was landmarked, the signage was not a historic element of the building. The signage has already been disturbed from a historically perspective.

Mr. Berkey stated that he does not agree that digital message board signs are a way of the future, he believes that social media is a tool that many are now utilizing. He would also be concerned with setting a precedent.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that the Commission should consider the merits of each application, it is not necessarily creating a precedent, the Commission will rule on each individual case not on board generalities.

Mr. Galea stated that if you allow something now, it would not necessarily mean that would allow it within the future. Mr. Galea stated that the applicant has presented a sign that is set back, thoughtful design and the proposed signage is not very large. The duty of the Landmark Commission is to preserve historic significant property but also do not want to turn the buildings into museums and they cannot be utilized.

Mr. Griffiths ask Planning staff to review the conditions of approval from the previous Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Byington indicated that the conditions included the following:

1. The minimum display time shall be 10 seconds.
2. Brightness shall not impose a hazard to pedestrians or vehicular traffic, nor a nuisance to surrounding properties.
3. No white, ivory, or yellow backgrounds.
4. Flashing, animations and videos prohibited.
5. Display shall be limited to static displays.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that every digital message board sign has been approved and conditioned to adhere to the ODOT regulations.

Bob Shaffer, 315 Wayne Street, on behalf of Grace Episcopal Church, stated that the report states that internally lit signs are not permitted within the downtown design review area however the church is outside this area.

Mr. Voltz stated that his portion of the report should be removed, this was through Downtown Design Review area and this is Landmark Commission.

Mr. Shaffer stated that this is a church it is not a business, the messages will be a benefit of the community. They do not want to hang up a sign on the building. Mr. Shaffer spoke to Lisa Delaine who is in charge of reviewing applications from Ohio. Mrs. Delaine stated that alterations to National Registered properties are reviewed at a local level.

Mr. Galea moved to approve a digital message board sign at 315 Wayne Street; Mr. Griffiths seconded the motion.

Mr. Zuilhof stated that he is inclined to approve as the applicant has been sensitive with the approach and submission and a precedent will not be set with approval.

Mr. Griffiths stated that he was persuaded that it does not alter the historic district, and they are keeping the existing frame of the sign and replacing the paper mechanism to changing the information without altering the structure.

The motion approved unanimously.

Mr. Galea moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Griffith seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:00PM.



Casey Sparks, Clerk



Michael Zuilhof, Chairman