

**Landmark Commission
February 7, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting called to order:

Chair Griffiths called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Eliot Dyer, Alan Griffiths, Jeff Krabill, and Louis Schultz. Also, present were Arin Blair and Alec Ochs, who represented the Community Development Department, Stewart Hastings- Law Director, City Commissioner Richard Koonce, and clerk, Quinn Rambo. Ms. Yandell informed Staff in advance that she was unable to attend the meeting.

Election of Officers

Commissioner Schultz made a motion to keep the officers the same as the previous year, which would have Mr. Griffiths as Chair and Ms. Yandell as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dyer. A vote was called, and motion was approved unanimously.

Review of minutes from November 15, 2023

Chair Griffiths asked for a motion on the minutes. Commissioner Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Dyer seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the minutes were approved unanimously, as presented.

Applications:

149 East Water Street

Chair Griffiths introduced the application for 149 East Water Street and asked for the Staff Report. Mr. Ochs explained the building at 149 East Water Street was built around 1860. There was little known historical data on this property other than it had operated as a grain and construction supply store for over 87 years and had been minimally altered from its original condition. The Ohio historic Inventory of 1979 stated the following regarding the buildings important features were "Rounded arch 2nd & 3rd story windows with ornate cement "braiding" over arches, brackets on 1st floor cornice, and metalwork pilasters at doorways". The applicant, Family Health Services, proposed to place a new halo backlit wall sign and three flat cut acrylic lettering sets on the façade facing E. Water St. The halo lit lettering would be fabricated from aluminum and would have black painted faces and returns. The letters would be illuminated with white LED lighting. Remote power supplies would be mounted on the inside of the building. The proposed background color for the halo lit wall sign was an off-white cream tone previously approved by Landmarks Commission. The acrylic lettering would not have a background. The combined evaluation of the signs was meeting the dimension requirements for signage, per the zoning code. Staff determined the signs were of good quality design with simple graphics and simple messages. The shape was appropriate, the colors were not fluorescent, and met the guidelines aside from the illumination type. Halo-lit style illumination had been supported by the Landmark Commission for other projects, such as City Hall. The

owner received a conditional use permit from the Sandusky Planning commission on January 24, 2024, to place a sign above the ground floor. Staff supported the application for the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions: 1. All permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, Division of Planning, and any other applicable agency prior to construction. 2. Light sources should not be of excessive brightness or cause a glare hazardous to pedestrians or auto drivers or objectionable to adjacent residential uses. 3. The fixture was dimmable so if found to be a nuisance, it could be turned down and would be warm toned (3,000K or lower) white light, amber light, or filtered LED light. Chair Griffiths asked if the lower sign that states "Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Pharmacy" would not be illuminated. Mr. Ochs confirmed that portion of the sign would not be illuminated.

Chair Griffiths called for a motion on the application. Commissioner Krabill made a motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dyer. A vote was called, and the application was approved, unanimously.

186 East Market Street

Chair Griffiths introduced the application for 186 East Market Street and asked for the Staff Report. Mr. Ochs explained the site of 186 East. Market Street was recently a vacant storefront. The applicant leased the space to open a new restaurant called "WTF-R, What the Fried Rice" and requested a Certificate of appropriateness for signage with a white background. The applicant, WTF R2 Investments, LLC proposed to place new marque signage on the façade facing East Market Street and add window signs along East. Market Street and Wayne Street. The combined evaluation of the signs was not exceeding the dimensions of the current signage requirements, per the zoning code, but the zoning code limits the aggregate area of wall signs not to exceed twenty-five percent of the window area on which such signs are displayed. Staff asked the Landmark Commission to consider this zoning language as it pertained to preserving historic storefronts. Staff has determined that the 25% maximum coverage area per window is appropriate to apply to this proposal. The proposed background color for both the marque and window signage was white. The applicant was not aware of the requirement for approval from the Landmarks Commission prior to ordering signs with a white background. The Sandusky Preservation Design Guidelines state that "white backgrounds in signs is strongly discouraged". Staff talked with applicant, explained the guideline requirements. The applicant wished to proceed with the white background for the projecting sign and sought commission approval. Staff stated the proposed designs of the marque signage and window signage consisted of acceptable designs with simple graphics and simple messages. The shapes were appropriate, the colors were not fluorescent, and the included colors were primary and not flashy. The guidelines discouraged signage with a white background. d. Following the Landmarks Commission findings from a similar recent case, staff recommends the following: 1. Staff recommends a denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the window signage, asking the applicant to bring forward a design that meets the zoning standards and removes the white

background and submit an updated application for staff approval. 2. Staff is not opposed to the granting of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the projecting sign, as the size and location of its installation will not overly detract from the historic character of the storefront. There are no recommended conditions for this recommendation, as sign permit applications have already been submitted. Chair Griffiths asked Staff if there had been any discussions with the applicant about what kind of signage could replace the current signs. Mr. Ochs stated that he had talked to the applicant and encouraged them to remove the background. Ms. Blair added that if the background was removed and transparent, the applicant could keep the current logo size of the signs. Commissioner Krabill stated that he understood why the applicant was requesting to keep the white because the sign shown to the left was getting lost on the window. Commissioner Schultz voiced his concern because the guidelines specifically state no white backgrounds. Commissioner Krabill stated the guidelines were not laws. Chair Griffiths wanted to talk about the window signs, separate from the blade sign. Commissioner Dyer asked that the sign was too big as it is but if they inversed the colors the size would be acceptable. Mr. Och stated that was correct. Commissioner Krabill asked if the applicant came back with a gray or tan background would that be adequate to meet the guidelines. Mrs. Ochs stated that was correct. Ms. Blair stated the signs did not meet the zoning code, which required the applicant to replace the signs regardless of the background color. She continued that the guidelines recommend against white because it distracted from the historic character and architecture and the applicant was willing to change the window sign. Chair Griffiths pointed out that the sign on the Wayne Street covered approximately 90% of the window and to comply with the zoning code, the sign would need to be significantly reduced. Chair Griffiths stated that the current signs did not meet the guidelines and he would support the Staff recommendation. Commissioner Krabill asked if the applicant could resubmit the application after the size issue was addressed and the background issue could be a simple adjustment. Commissioner Schultz stated downtown has many beautiful buildings, but the signage was not great, and the Commission should hold the line. Commissioner Dyer stated he agreed the sign took away from the building and what was going on inside the building.

Chair Griffiths called for a motion on for Staff recommendation 1 to deny the window signage as presented. Commissioner Schultz made a motion to deny the certificate of appropriateness for the window signs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dyer. A vote was called, and the application was denied, unanimously.

Chair Griffiths called for a motion on for Staff recommendation 2 to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the projecting sign. Commissioner Krabill made a motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness for the projecting sign. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dyer. A vote was called, and the motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness for projecting sign was approved, unanimously.

Administrative Approvals:

1119 West Washington Street

Chair Griffiths asked Staff to present the administrative approvals. Mr. Ochs stated a driver struck the building and left a hole in the side of the building at 1119 West Washington

Street. Staff reviewed the application and spoke with the contractor. They were able to use bricks from the building to repair the façade. Administrative approval was granted by Staff on October 2nd, 2023, with the condition that all applicable permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, and any other applicable agency prior to construction and that restoration work mimics the previous design of the building's exterior character.

136 East Market Street

Mr. Ochs explained the next administrative approval was for storefront renovation and signage. Mr. Ochs stated that there was not much history or historic photos for 136 East Market Street. The applicant was replacing the entire storefront and would be very similar to the storefronts of Lakelynn Designs and MW Design Studio directly to the west. The façade was replaced with black aluminum trim and matte black finish. Staff considered this a minor change that had been previously approved for other similar projects by the Commission. Administrative approval was granted by Staff on November 29th, 2023, with the condition that all applicable permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, and any other applicable agency prior to construction. Chair Griffiths stated that block of the City was coming along from a few years ago.

305 East Water Street

Mr. Ochs explained the project at 305 East Water Street was for a deck expansion. The project met the interior standards and the guideline standards, specifically that the deck should be of simple design and detail. Staff granted administrative approval, as a minor change to the expand the existing deck, on November 15, 2023, with the condition that all applicable permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, and any other applicable agency prior to construction. Ms. Blair added this was not a permanent structure and any site changes needed approval.

Other Business:

Chair Griffiths thanked the Commissioners for attending the special meeting and that the Commission would meet for their regularly scheduled meeting on February 21st, 2024, where the Commission would review their revised design guidelines and procedures.

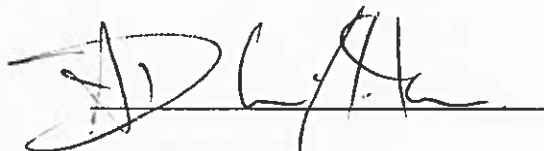
Meeting adjourned:

Chair Griffiths called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Schultz made a motion to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Dyer. The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 pm.

Approved by:



Clerk



Chair/ Vice Chair