

HISTORIC VERMILION DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Minutes of October 6, 2021 @ 6:00 pm

Roll Call: Robbie Brown, Judy Williams, Marilou Suszko, Brenda Miklos. Absent: Susan Cairns

Robbie Brown, Chairwoman called the Wednesday, October 6, 2021 meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

J. Williams MOVED, M. Suszko seconded to approve the meeting minutes of September 1, 2021. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

(Residential) Applicant: Anne Graham – 5830 Ohio Street (Windows)

R. Brown permanently tabled this application due to no representation.

NEW BUSINESS:

(Residential) Applicant: Jim & Jacquie Batchelder – 5841 Huron Street (Windows, Trim)

This application was tabled to the November meeting at the applicants' request. J. Williams mentioned she thought the work had already been done. G. Fisher said the homeowner requested to come back in November, so she was not certain.

(Residential) Applicant: Jason Kowal – 5288 South Street (Roofing)

Jason Kowal said his roof was tan and now it is slate. He noted the work has already been completed. J. Williams said she had a problem when the work is finished before coming to the board, so asked him to explain the process he took. Did he go to the city to ask for permission? J. Kowal said he did and received a permit. J. Williams asked how he found out about this committee. J. Kowal said he received an email. G. Fisher asked if he received an email from her and he replied yes. G. Fisher said he probably submitted his permit application and historic application together because she received a copy of his Application for Certificate of Appropriateness from the building department, so technically he did it right, but went ahead and did the work before he came before the board. She said they actually want the applicant to come to this board first. J. Kowal said he started the process last month and the clerk noted last month's meeting was booked. G. Fisher said the clerk probably meant the deadline was passed to get on last month's meeting. J. Kowal said the clerk said it would be this month, so that was the process. J. Williams said she looked at the roof and it does look very good.

R. Brown MOVED; J. Williams seconded to approve the application as submitted. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

(Commercial) Applicant: Lisa Kaplan – 678 Main Street (Signage)

Lisa Kaplan provided to the board members pictures of her finished patio that was approved last month. She also provided pictures of proposed façade signage of an aluminum composite sign backer with digital printed graphic applied. Additionally, she provided pictures of her proposed high-density urethane carved dimensional sign blade, which is painted to match logo colors. It includes an aluminum custom fabricated sign bracket that is painted flat black. She did receive a permit for the blade sign as required.

M. Suszko said the designer did a really nice job on the signage. She said when looking at the tree in front of the business today verses the tree in the picture it looks like there were some branches that were taken off. L. Kaplan said they did this last year. The tree commission asked if they if they could snip off some branches. M. Suszko said this is good because the tree would block her sign. L. Kaplan said she was trying to keep within the color scheme of Claire's. J. Williams thought the signage looked very good as she likes the colors. M. Suszko said the blade sign is a good idea too for this stretch. L. Kaplan said she took the advice of her Main Street Executive Director. R. Brown told Lisa that she really upgraded the area in the back as well.

M. Suszko MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to approve the signage as described above. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Residential) Applicant: Dennis Clark – 683 Jefferson (Fence)

Dennis Clark said he just moved into the area, and they are doing a lot of improvements to the house. They removed an existing chain link fence and plan on replacing it with a six-foot white vinyl privacy fence. The fence has not been installed as of yet. He said when he went to the building department and they assumed they did not need to come before the board because he was not in the historic district, so he proceeded to purchase the fence. When he called to get the permit, they looked his address up and said he was the last address in the historic district, so he would need approval.

J. Williams MOVED; R. Brown seconded to approve the fence as described above. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Residential) Don Pretzer – 5583 Ohio Street (Roof)

Don Pretzer said his roof was 22 years old and repair is necessary. He explained he will replace the shingles of like-kind (green).

B. Miklos MOVED; R. Brown seconded to approve the application as presented. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Residential) Dan Pryor – 5743 Lake Street (Windows, Awnings, Roofing)

R. Brown advised the board that Dan Pryor did contact her as he could not attend the meeting. However, he explained the project to her in detail and provided a packet for the board. She explained they will be removing the screens on the porch with six double hung windows. Polycarbonate panels to be installed below windows and other openings. He will also install a green shingled awning over five existing front windows that will extend out about 16" with a hip roof on both ends.

He also will replace the upper small window with a twin double hung window and will install green shingled awning over lower existing twin double hung windows.

M. Suszko asked if he already put the windows in. R. Brown said no he is showing the board through photoshop what the windows/awnings will look like. M. Suszko did not see what the point was to hold him up. R. Brown agreed and noted it is a beautiful home.

B. Miklos MOVED; R. Brown seconded to approve the application as submitted. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Commercial) Water Treatment Plant – Jeff & Carol Hammerschmidt

Mayor Forthofer explained that Jeff Hammerschmidt texted him to say he was stuck on the highway dealing with a business matter. Therefore, he explained that Jeff & Carol Hammerschmidt have offered to help freshen up the Water Plant on Main Street downtown near the beach. The suggested items are shutters and color changes, so he submitted some conceptual plans on what they would like to do for board review and commentary. He hasn't chosen the colors yet and would like a recommendation from the board on a choice.

R. Brown said she is glad somebody is taking a look at this building and helping out with it. J. Williams said the color choices for the shutters as submitted is either grey or blue.

M. Suszko thought it was really generous of Mr. and Mrs. Hammerschmidt to want to invest in a building that is owned by the city. She preferred the neutral color over the blue. R. Brown said she actually likes the blue. J. Williams said this is such an improvement. M. Suszko asked whose responsibility or obligation it is to fix the brick on the landing. Mayor Forthofer said this would be the city's responsibility. R. Brown said they just want to do cosmetic improvements. B. Miklos confirmed it was the door and the shutters. She said she liked the grey and R. Brown said it is probably the wiser of the two. J. Williams thought the blue was stark. R. Brown said the board's opinion seems to lean to the grey color. Mayor Forthofer said he would relay this information to Jeff Hammerschmidt.

M. Suszko pointed out she understands they are putting a shutter on the window, but they need to watch the location next to the new signage, which is to the right of the door if you're facing the building. She isn't sure where else the signage could go at this point because she did not know how wide the shutter is.

M. Suszko said at every meeting they have seen where people have come before the board to show their project that they have already completed, so the question is – where is the glitch here? R. Brown said they bring this up every meeting. G. Fisher said she relays to the building department they have a deadline, but everybody says they have emergencies, so she doesn't know what the answer is. Mayor Forthofer said he has spoken with the building department, and they have shown him and assured him how they give the residents the information and paperwork and the fact they have to come to this board. R. Brown suggested putting an article in the Photojournal telling people the process. G. Fisher suggested the Mayor put this in one of his mayor articles as the procedure. B. Miklos said it is not only happening with residential – it is business as well, so why are they here. M. Suszko thought

there was some level where they were not communicating with the public. Putting something in the Photojournal is a great idea because people do read what the mayor is saying, but on another level they are missing the opportunity to communicate with these people and let them know that this is important. G. Fisher thought people may just do the work not knowing they have to come before this board. M. Suszko asked why they do not know. R. Brown said when she built down in Harbourtown years ago this was in place, and she never heard of it. She was new to the neighborhood and did not have a clue it was even called Harbourtown, so it is difficult. G. Fisher said even people who have lived in Harbourtown for years may not know about this board because they may not read the Photojournal, and they might not be involved in city government. B. Miklos said it isn't just residential though – it's businesses as well. M. Suszko asked how many businesses they have had this year that have started up and had their sign made before they came before the board – almost all of them, so somewhere there is just a disconnect. She said they get to the board, and they may not like their signage but how do you say anything because once again you get into an issue where Vermilion becomes a place that is not friendly to new business, and this is not what this is. B. Miklos said she as a business owner has been downtown and she took all the proper channels and she knew the rules and did not know the rules, and she followed the rules. There is something going on. E. Skahen suggested doing something with the building department when somebody goes for a permit in that they provide a map of what is historic Harbourtown, which goes with their application. G. Fisher said the building department has the map and information – it's just getting the people there. R. Brown said there was a business owner downtown several years ago and she copied out the sign rules for her and it was done and never came before the board. J. Williams thought a penalty should be involved to put teeth into it. R. Brown said at the last meeting she questioned the signs and would not have approved it, but they already spent the money and were trying to get open the next day, so it puts the board into a horrible position, which they shouldn't be as they are volunteering their time and are trying to give the best to the community, and when you're forced to accept... M. Suszko said they are not forced, but which one of them wants to stand up and say this is not appropriate for downtown and moves they don't accept it. R. Brown said she was close last week, but once she heard what it cost to do it, then are they being cruel.

Mayor Forthofer said this board is not unique to Vermilion. He said there is a willingness to not know – prefer not to know and they just rather ask for forgiveness and not permission.

M. Suszko said at their last Heritage Ohio meeting which is an organization for Main Street Vermilion they talked a lot about Design & Review Boards because every Main Street Community has a Design & Review Board. They are going to develop a training session for Design & Review groups because they all experience the same problems. This is nothing that is unique to Vermilion as this is everywhere. It talks about things like how to create the Design & Review Board and policies for your community that makes sense for your community. So, if you look at a community like Charlotte, North Carolina which is a beautiful historic district with tight rules. You do not invest in that community unless you're prepared to pay for things like all wood windows and replacing rolled glass, which is very expensive to do. There are so many restrictions, and it is very costly, but they cannot do that in Vermilion, but what can they do? What things can they talk about that help building and homeowners make decisions on what they're doing that keep with the historic

flavor. They are maybe a little too far to worry about historic preservation because this is very costly and sometimes the elements are just too far gone to restore, so they talk about replacing them. So, what are those architectural features? She will be the first to admit that there are a lot of times where she is underprepared to be able to express to somebody that this is how you can replace that feature and here is somebody that can help you. They do not know because they deal with the aesthetics primarily. They do not deal with the historical preservation for the most part, and most of the building owners don't, so how do they rewrite what they're doing to make sense for this community. Economically too – it is pricey to restore historic features in historic buildings. R. Brown said she agrees, and they have been talking about revisiting the guidelines because they were written so long ago. She said she has copies of the Revitalization Plan which will be revisited. M. Suszko said Heritage Ohio's training session will not be until 2022, but universally every Main Street Director was really excited because this is nothing new to them. R. Brown said she would personally be interested to hear what they have to say and then she would like the board to revisit their guidelines because some of it is not up to date. It was 20 to 30 years ago, and things look different now. She said the roof on the pavilion at Victory Park as an example is metal, but it looks like shingle, so this will get them up to date on what materials are out there for the aesthetic aspect. M. Suszko agreed that materials have changed, and they have come along way with the quality and look, and they are talking about a lot of money to keep them authentic.

J. Williams said they had talked about a day that it would be almost like a retreat and wondered if they should proceed with this prior to them getting the training, so that the training will make more sense to them, so she suggested scheduling a date in January, possibly the first Wednesday of the month rather than having a meeting at 6pm, and maybe meeting in the morning to go over all of the papers they have. R. Brown suggested waiting on scheduling a meeting in January because the first Wednesday would be tough. J. Williams said she just doesn't like to see things put off. G. Fisher said Marilou's information will give them additional direction where to start. M. Suszko said she will keep the board up to date on the training. They can also reach out to other Design & Reviews that have it all together.

J. Hammerschmidt came into the meeting before adjournment and R. Brown expressed how much the board appreciates him and his family for taking on this task as it is a bit of an eyesore. She said the main question addressed the signage on the building, which Marilou readdressed pursuant to her comments above. She said the sign is blue, which is the city's wayfinding sign color, so she thought against the blue they proposed may not work. J. Hammerschmidt said they were leaning toward the grey.

ADJOURNMENT:

R. Brown adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 3, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.
@ Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion