

City of Portage – Historic District Commission
Wednesday, June 1, 2016
City Hall – Conference Room #2

Meeting called to order at 8:15 AM

Present: C. Forrest; J. Ebert; J. Lotz, M. Deming, K. VanLonkhuyzen ; J. Duniphin and E. Eklov

Absent: F. Grunert; S. Nemeth; and R. Randall.

Guests: Michael Kasten and Mick Lynch

Michael Kasten has submitted an Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification to Historic District Structures.

Property: 8009 Cox's Drive

Proposed action: Demolition

Mr. Kasten has used this building for office space. He was the original tenant and has been renting the space for the past few years. For the past 3 years, the building has been sitting empty because the building does not meet current city code, and because the building needs substantial repairs.

Specifically, the major repairs include the roof leaking causing mold in the interior and there is a water leak into the basement floor from the parking lot due to improper grading. City code would require a handicap ramp and refitting a bathroom for handicap access.

Mr. Kasten is requesting permission to tear the building down. He is paying property taxes and utilities. He is unable to rent the space until significant repairs are made to the structure and the building is brought up to code.

Mr. Kasten hopes that the City of Portage will assume responsibility for the building. If not, he would like to demolish it because the building has become a significant financial drain.

HDC informed Mr. Kasten that the interior problems are not part of the HDC oversight. The HDC is concerned with the exterior of historic buildings and a building historic status.

HDC also informed Mr. Kasten that by state law there is a legal process that must be followed before any action can be taken to tear down a building that is part of a historic register.

HDC has set up a site visit for Thursday, June 9th at 9:00 AM. The HDC asked Mr. Kasten for grace time to set up a study committee and review this situation.

Approval of May 4th, 2016 minutes: Approved with two changes to punctuation and one spelling error.

Old Business:

3221 W. Milham –
Nieuwenhuis proposal for new barn.

- ZBA decided that the size of the barn should be 24 X 50 X 18 ft.
- The current footprint is 30 X 20.
- By HDC guidelines, the homeowner has 6 months to complete the project.
- The ZBA also has given 120 days to dismantle the current barn. Re-building timeline pending.

5720 Oakland-
Vergunst barn.

- Homeowner would like to disassemble and re-build barn.
- Steve Stiers, guest speaker for Preservation Week, and homeowner went out to look at the barn.
- Homeowner would need additional historic materials to restore the barn.

2663 Mandigo-
Kiley

- This is still an open case.
- Exterior maintenance on house and outbuildings required, including removal of debris.
- Possible lien on this property.
- Currently 2 houses on the property which is in violation of city code.
- Property needs to be cleaned up.
- Neighbors have filed complaints about the condition of the property.

1521 E. Centre-
Davis

- Nothing to report.

10234 East Shore-
Giem

- Nothing to report.

New Business:

Guest Mick Lynch:

- The barns on Sprinkle Road property will be painted over the summer.
- The Greek Revival home, on Sprinkle Road is now ready for lease.
- The Queen Anne home on Sprinkle used for his main office will be painted this year.
- He has been working on the buildings that are part of 3821 W. Milham, the Cully Gage farm. The barn has a new metal roof. Working on the exterior of the garage and on trim repair. The chimney on the rear is under repair. The berm between the property and the new housing development has been graded.

922 Osterhout-

- Property Inspection – exterior painting needed and homeowner wants to replace windows. Pending.

8643 S. Westnedge-

- Homeowners are deceased.
- HDC has been informed the heirs intend to sell the property.
- Realtor representing the heirs called to ask about what it means to be an historic property.

There was a discussion about how to better inform new owners of historic properties. Should the HDC prepare a packet of information about the historical attributes of the home they are buying?

For the next meeting HDC members are to come with ideas about what should be in an informational packet for new historic property homeowners.

HDC should think about efforts to have better communication with historic property owners.

Things to consider:

- Many buildings are quickly deteriorating.
- Many buildings are now in areas being commercially developed.
- Should the HDC set standards for historic properties?
- Should the HDC do an inventory of the current state of historic properties?

Katie VanLonkhuyzen gave a report to the Council at its May 24 meeting regarding the annual update on the HDC activities and focus.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted: Martha Deming Maytnier