



DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

MINUTES (FINAL)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2020

6:30 P.M.

ZOOM WEBINAR

PRESENT: Tamie Ehinger, Chair; Leslie Mechem; Leslie DiCarlo; Rob DuBoff; Ellen Sheehan

STAFF: Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development, City of Saratoga Springs

LATE ARRIVAL: Chris Bennett arrived at 6:37 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Tamie Ehinger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated the proceedings of this meeting are being recorded for the benefit of the secretary. Because the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript of the recording.

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Leslie Mechem made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 2, and September 16, 2020 DRC meetings with minor corrections. Rob DuBoff seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor;

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

B. POSSIBLE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

The intent of a consent agenda is to identify any application that appears to be "approvable" without need for further evaluation or discussion. If anyone wishes to further discuss any proposed consent agenda item, then that item would be pulled from the "consent agenda" and dealt with individually.

1. **20200643 HIDDEN GARDENS SIGNAGE**, 87 Church Street, Architectural Review of a new monument sign within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.
2. **20180746 SCHMIDT RESIDENCE/MOTOHOLDINGS LOT 1A**, Cobb Alley, request for extension of Historic Review approval granted April 2019 for a new single-family residence within the Urban Residential-3 District.
3. **20180747 MOTOHOLDINGS, LOT B**, Cobb Alley, request for extension of Historic Review approval granted April 2019 for a new single-family residence within the Urban Residential-3 District.
4. **20180748 MOTOHOLDINGS, LOT C**, Cobb Alley, request for extension of Historic Review approval granted April 2019 for a new single-family residence within the Urban Residential-3 District.
5. **20180749 MOTOHOLDINGS, LOT D**, Cobb Alley, request for extension of Historic Review approval granted April 2019 for a new single-family residence within the Urban Residential-3 District.
6. **20200601 EHINGER EV CHARGING STATION**, 688 North Broadway, Historic Review of a new, rear wall-

mounted EV charging station within the Urban Residential-1 District.

7. 20200662 SQF LLV UTILITY POLE TELECOMMUNICATION INSTALLATION, Staffords Bridge Road, Architectural Review of the installation of a new wooden utility pole and small cell telecommunication Installation within the Rural Residential district.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated she will be recusing from voting on application #6.

Leslie Mechem made a motion in the matter of the Hidden Gardens Signage, 87 Church Street, Schmidt Residence/Motoholdings Lot 1A, Cobb Alley, Motoholdings, Lot B, Cobb Alley, Motoholdings Lot C, Cobb Alley, Motoholdings Lot D, Cobb Alley, and the SQF LLC Utility Pole Telecommunication Installation, Staffords Bridge Road that the applications be approved as submitted. Leslie DiCarlo seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

RECUSAL:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, recused from the following application.

6. 20200601 EHINGER EV CHARGING STATION, 688 North Broadway, Historic Review of a new, rear wall-mounted EV charging station within the Urban Residential-1 District.

Leslie Mechem made a motion in the matter of the Ehinger EV Charging Station, 688 Broadway that the application be approved as submitted. Leslie DiCarlo seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, recused; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 4-0

C. DRC APPLICATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION

NOTE:

Commission member Chris Bennett assumed his position on the Board at 6:37 P.M.

1. **20200574 EXCELSIOR PARK PROJECT**, Excelsior Avenue and Ormondy Lane, consideration of SEQRA Lead Agency Status (Architectural Review) for a proposed mixed-use development project including 179 residential units, 37,600 square feet of commercial space, and a 60-room hotel with restaurant totaling 147,600 square feet within the Transect-4 & Transect-5 Districts.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated this is a procedural item for consideration of SEQRA Lead Agency Status. Based on the scope of the project the DRC normally defers Lead Agency Status to the Planning Board.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, made a motion in the matter of the Excelsior Park Project, Excelsior Avenue and Ormondy Lane, the DRC defers Lead Agency Status to the Planning Board should they seek it. Leslie Mechem seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor;

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

2. **20200548 INGRAM RESIDENCE EXPANSION** 207 Nelson Avenue, sketch discussion (Historic Review) of a possible expansion of a Register-contributing property within the Urban Residential-3 District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, reiterated that this is before the Commission this evening for a sketch discussion of a possible expansion, therefore no action will be taken this evening.

Applicant: Klare and Matt Ingram

Agent: Sue Davis, SD Atelier Architecture

Mrs. Ingram provided a history of their ownership of this historic property since 2014. They initially focused on making the home safe and to restore, update and return systems to working order in their home. Currently, our home requires some exterior and systems replacements as well as requiring more functional space for their family. We have reached out to Sue Davis as well as the Saratoga Preservation Foundation. We have reviewed the input from the Preservation Foundation and explored several the alternatives suggested. What we are proposing is appropriate for the neighborhood, the property and will correct elements which are non-conforming as well as reflect the DRC design principles for a historic home.

Ms. Davis provided a visual of the site location noting Sweeney Way runs adjacent to the property. A rare historic elm tree is in the rear of the site as well as an old stone carriage house which backs up to the home in the rear. This is a small home and houses two bedrooms on the second floor. A view of the existing site plan and footprint as well as the proposed site plan was provided. Sweeney Way, a city owned brick alley, is extremely narrow with grading and drainage a problem which leads to extensive, year-round flooding. In the winter dangerous snow and ice buildup. Current parking conditions for an adjacent home create issues as well. A visual of the surrounding neighborhood was provided for context. Ms. Davis reviewed some of the existing building issues noting a dated, awkward kitchen, side wall violation of zoning and building codes and has had several encounters with vehicles hitting the house. The existing rear porch is to be removed which is not original. Existing floor plans as well as proposed floor plans along with a three-dimensional view of both current and proposed plan were provided. Views of all elevations along with streetscape views were provided noting the applicants are proposing removal of the vinyl siding and replacing two vinyl windows with wood frame windows. On the south elevation the addition is of concern regarding its originality to the home. Alternative design studies were provided as well.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, thanked the owners for their investment in their beautiful historic home. It is challenging to update a historic home to accommodate a growing family. The City does have design guidelines for these historic districts that reflect the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines and Standards. We are here to provide guidance as to what is appropriate and what is not appropriate for this beautiful historic home. The Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation also expressed similar concerns as to the garage mass and scale as well as the garage location on the property. Also, how does the Commission feel specifically regarding the removal of existing addition in that it does seem to have some historic qualities being built back in the 1800's?

Discussion ensued among the Commission regarding this application.

Ellen Sheehan stated regarding the removal of the existing addition, she does not object to the removal of it. It does not add anything architecturally to the building.

Rob DuBoff stated the notion of removing historic structures is disconcerting and is somewhat of a troubling trend in town. He noted concern regarding the removal of the historic "L" and what that means for other structures in historic districts. The other issue is the garage which is a suburban look and could set a precedent on a main street.

Discussion ensued regarding the curb cut on the property which did not come before the Design Review Commission. The curb cut was approved by the Department of Public Works but the applicant never came in front of the Commission for further approval.

Chris Bennett stated the design is great with the proposed details and materials. He questioned if the alley way is dictating the location of the garage. Overall, the applicants have been very thoughtful in retaining the look of the Greek revival.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application.

Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation stated she appreciates all the comments and thoughts the Ingram's have provided. The extension in question does appear in the 1866 map. It has been present for 154 years. It is an important part of the building. She does struggle with the garage and the placement of the garage. Ms. Bosshart voiced concern over the loss of two windows in the L shaped addition if the Commission decides to approve the current plans.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, questioned the two windows Ms. Bosshart was referring to which would be lost.

Mrs. Ingram stated she believes Ms. Bosshart is referring to the first-floor windows. One which is located on the first-floor middle on the south elevation, and the other is on the front facing portion of the jut out.

Ms. Bosshart stated the applicant is correct, but the window openings are important features even if they have been replaced with an inappropriate window.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated this is an interesting application. Our design guidelines which we take very seriously and aim for consistency. The Standards in the Historic District indicate that it would be appropriate for a garage to be detached and as close to the rear of the property as possible. The removal of historic additions is also frowned upon. This is an interesting application due to unusual circumstances that there is some justification in moving forward with some of the aspects of this application as being proposed this evening. We have approved attached garages in the district where it is unavoidable or inappropriate. Typically, the connectors are small and set back and made to appear as least visible as possible. I would suggest that the applicant take that into consideration. Removal of the addition does have mixed feelings from the Commission.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion or questions from the Commission.

Leslie DiCarlo stated she is struggling with this application. The design is nice and a great solution for their family. She has a carriage house which is located directly on a very heavily trafficked alley. I do not know that it is dangerous but make the turning radius exceedingly difficult due to the narrowness of the alley and the parking behind a residence for 181 Phila Street. This is a dilemma caused by what it is surrounded by. Nelson Street is alternate side parking. Perhaps if the connector could be reduced, recessed or possibly glass. I do not want to deny them a garage, but this is a very suburban look.

Ms. Davis stated she is also struggling with this and tried to present the best solution to the Commission. We will take the Commission's comments digest them and we will be returning.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated she agrees with Leslie the connector should be reduced and as recessed as possible. We are happy you have come before the Commission with a sketch discussion. This is beneficial and is a smart thing to do before moving forward. We hope the feedback is helpful. We are all on the same page in trying to move this application forward keeping within our design guidelines to the extent that we can bearing in mind there are unusual circumstances with this home. We look forward to seeing you before us again.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Design Review Meeting, Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.
Design Review Meeting, Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business to discuss Tamie Ehinger, Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Buzanowski
Recording Secretary

APPROVED 10-21-20

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