



CITY OF WESTMINSTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, November 3, 2021, at 7:00 PM

Virtual meeting via Zoom and broadcasted live on the City Facebook page

A meeting of the City of Westminster Historic District Commission was held virtually via Zoom and broadcasted live on the City Facebook page on November 3, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

Call to Order

Chair McMasters read the statement of authority into the record.

Chair Kristen McMasters, Vice-Chair Aaron Burroughs, Commissioner Josh Ambrose, Commissioner Christine Ameduri, and Commissioner Kevin Wagman were present. City staff members Mark Depo and Andrew Gray were also present.

The following members of the public were present: Max Johansson.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ameduri moved to approve the meeting summary for October 6, 2021 as presented. Commissioner Wagman seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Chair McMasters opened Old Business Item A – Tax Credit Application Requirement Discussion. Mr. Gray provided background information on the item.

Vice-Chair Burroughs motioned, seconded by Commissioner Wagman to include the following updated language in the Rules of Order and Procedure for the Historic District Commission: “Section 5.B. Any applications for projects with an estimated cost that exceeds \$15,000 shall provide two cost estimates. However, if a second cost estimate cannot be obtained, an explanation as to why shall be provided with the application.” The motion passed unanimously.

In addition, consideration for language regarding connection between bidding entity and the property will

be discussed by staff with the City attorney.

Chair McMasters opened Old Business Item B – Pre-Construction Application for Historic Rehabilitation Property Tax Credits TC #21-01. Mr. Gray stated that the Applicant withdrew their Application and there was no action required, as it was an information item only.

The applicant, Chair Kristin McMasters, stated her disagreement for the requirement of a licensed contractor to perform work which does not require licensure by the State of Maryland.

Chair McMasters opened Old Business Item C – Façade Improvement Program Application for 121 East Main Street. Mr. Gray stated that the applicant was requesting \$13,500 in grant funding for improvements outlined in the staff report.

Mr. Johansson was present and clarified that all shutters were in need of replacement as none were able to be repaired. He also clarified that the landscaping improvements were not included in the funding request.

Commissioner Ameduri motioned, seconded by Commissioner Ambrose, to approve the Façade Improvement Program Application for 121 East Main Street, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair McMasters opened Old Business Item D – Demolition Permit for 288 East Main Street. Mr. Depo reported that staff reached out to the property owner for an archival report and supplemental information. Mr. Depo extended the 30-day review requirement and will provide the Commission with an update for review and comment. He added that although the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) have no regulatory power, they are happy to work with the Commission on best practices and could attend a future meeting and provide input. However, the City and the Commission must submit a formal request letter for such collaboration.

New Business

Chair McMasters opened New Business Item E – New Application for Historic Rehabilitation Property Tax Credits. Mr. Gray reviewed the additional requirements on the new application, which was revised for overall clarity. The form was also reformatted for uniformity with other City applications. The Commission provided feedback and requested edits, which staff will incorporate.

Vice-Chair Burroughs motioned, seconded by Commissioner Wagman, to approve the application with requested revisions as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair McMasters opened New Business Item F – Commission Discussion/Outreach “Best Practices” for Local Historic Preservation Programs. Mr. Depo stated that staff is requesting guidance to invite MHT and HCWHA to the Commission meeting to discuss the demolition of 288 East Main Street, as well as best practices to improve overall regulations.

Commissioner Wagman motioned, seconded by Commissioner Ambrose, for staff to draft a letter requesting an advisory opinion from MHT and HCWHA on the potential demolition of 288 East Main Street, specifically on the significance of the property and how losing it would affect their operations and heritage efforts in the Westminster region. The letter will also ask those agencies to provide insight on best practices. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair McMasters opened New Business Item F - Commission Discussion/Outreach: "Best Practices" for Local Historic Preservation Programs. Chair McMasters asked staff to explore best practices for historic preservation outside of the national registry and compare other municipalities. Mr. Depo confirmed that staff will begin research and welcomed additional assistance from the Commission.

Commissioner Wagman asked about the possibility of annexing additional properties into the City's Historic District. Chair McMasters suggested creating separate districts for different areas around the City.

Historic District Commission and Public Comments

Mr. Depo reported that the Downtown Business Association is scheduled to meet next week. He then reported that the Small Business Saturday Passport Program will begin on November 27 and run through December 5. The Mayor's Cup Holiday Storefront Window Decorating Contest was also coming up and a winner will be announced at an upcoming Mayor and Common Council meeting. Finally, Mr. Depo reported that the Winter and Holiday Farmers' Market will be located at 29 West Main Street and will start on November 26 and run through December 19.

Chair McMasters asked if the Commission could have a table set up at the Winter and Holiday Farmers' Market to promote its programs. Mr. Depo confirmed that it could be set up and requested volunteers.

Chair McMasters reported that an historical marker has been placed in front of the Shellman House at 206 East Main Street, signifying the importance of the landmark location for the Women's Suffrage Movement. It is only one of two markers in Maryland, on a trail dedicated to commemorating Women's Suffrage. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is being planned and will be announced soon.

Adjournment

Chair McMasters motioned to Adjourn. The Commission adjourned at 8:26 PM.