

**MINUTES  
HISTORIC COMMISSION  
March 17, 2022**

**TYPE:** Regular Meeting  
**PLACE:** City Council Chambers

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeremy Loukinas            Roger Daniel  
Greg Emrick                            Andy Brickler  
Matt Dixon                             James Stabler  
Levi Cramer

**STAFF PRESENT:** James Metz, City Planner  
Devra, Assistant Development Services Director  
Ashely Combs, Development Services Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mayor Condrey

Mr. Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Roll call was made; a voting quorum was present.

**SWEARING IN WITNESSES**

Mr. Dixon called for a swearing-in of witnesses. James Metz was sworn in.

**PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Dixon asked the members if they had reviewed the meeting minutes. Mr. Cramer addressed the correction needed for March 1, 2022, minutes on page 5 in which the minutes stated "Mayor Nenni" instead of "Mayor Condrey". Having heard no additional changes, corrections, or additions, Mr. Dixon asked if there was anyone who would like to approve the minutes for the January 20, 2022 meeting as is and the March 1, 2022, meeting subject to edit. Mr. Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Loukinas seconded. Mr. Cramer abstained from voting on the March 1, 2022 meeting minutes. All minutes were approved through the roll.

**1224 CENTRAL AVENUE – PEDESTRIANIZED AREA  
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Mr. Dixon requested a staff report. James Metz presented the proposal for the installation of a six-foot-tall black metal fence on both sides of the pedestrianized alley and the resurfacing of the existing asphalt with brick pavers. The application before us as it is a change in the outside appearance which triggers a COA. There is a rendering attached of the finished project with additional photos detailing the materials that will be used. This pedestrianized alley and resurfacing would serve as an outdoor patio area for Merkels Tavern and does not interfere with the fire escape for 1218 Central Ave. The applicant called earlier and stated he would not be here tonight due to medical issues.

Mr. Dixon asked the public if there was anyone from the public that would comment in favor of the application or against the application. Seeing no responses Mr. Cramer moved to close the public

forum on this decision, the public forum was closed through a unanimous vote. Mr. Dixon asked if the Historic Commission has any questions for Mr. Metz.

Mr. Daniel asked if there is a fire escape and if the installation of the fence would interfere with the safety of the building and the possible residents. Mr. Loukinas stated that he does not believe the upper floors to be occupied. Mr. Cramer asked to show the aerial photo again and stated that he believes the two gates would serve as exits in case of emergency. Mr. Brickler asked if this application would need any additional permits.

Mr. Metz stated that it would need a certificate of zoning compliance and the building department may need to review the new construction as the building department looks at fire safety features.

Several Historic Commission members agreed that the fire safety issue is a due diligence responsibility of staff rather than the Historic Commission.

Mr. Dixon acknowledged that the alleyway was pedestrianized in two sections. Mr. Cramer asked if the owner of 1218 Central Ave had approved of the changes on his portion of the alleyway. Mr. Metz stated that he was informed by the applicant that the owner of 1218 Central Ave had renounced his claim to his portion of the alleyway. This is stated on the application as well. Mr. Cramer asked whether there is any proof of ownership or agreement to make the changes that are being requested. Mr. Metz stated that there is not any at this time. Mr. Cramer noted for the record that he could not vote to approve a change on property not owned by the applicant without proof of ownership and that he would have to vote no.

Mr. Emrick made the motion to approve of this application with the stipulation that there is signed agreement between property owners and that the approval from the Historic Commission is based on this agreement. Mr. Loukinas seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Mr. Cramer and Mr. Dixon voting no.

**1391 CENTRAL AVENUE – WALL SIGN**  
**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Mr. Dixon requested a staff report. James Metz read the property history and presented the wall sign change.

Mr. Dixon asked the public if there was anyone from the public that would comment in favor of the application or against the application. Seeing no responses Mr. Dixon moved to close the public forum on this decision, the public forum was closed unanimously.

Mr. Cramer asked if there had been a response back from the City's legal department regarding the need for Historic Commission to approve temporary window signage and that he has been waiting since January for this answer.

Mr. Metz stated that he believed that this question was before his time with the city and stated that window signage is viewed as temporary and doesn't require approval under a certain size according to the Middletown Development Code.

Mr. Cramer mentioned that sometimes the window signage lasts longer than the signs being approved. He follows up asking what is the code state for the transparency of signs.

Mr. Dixon asks about the requirement for window transparency.

Mr. Metz states he does not know about the requirements for sign transparency but will provide that answer at the next Historic Commission meeting.

Mr. Brickler states that he believes based on the rendering that the sign is much larger than the percentage that is allowed. Mr. Metz asks if Mr. Brickler is asking about the wall sign or the window sign as the Historic Commission only needs to approve the wall sign.

Mr. Brickler restates that it's not the window signage being approved but the wall sign itself.

Mr. Metz said he should have clarified that from the beginning of his presentation and the black and white wall sign is the only thing needing approval.

Mr. Dixon asks if there is a motion to approve the sign as is. Mr. Brickler made the motion to approve and Mr. Loukinas seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

### OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Dixon asked if there was any update about the local Historic Designation process from staff. Mr. Metz stated he has no new updates.

Mr. Dixon mentioned that he believes the Historic Commission had received photos from a previous request to see recent photos of homes that could be designated as historic properties.

Mr. Loukinas asks if Mr. Metz has the photo slide available. Mr. Metz states he does and then proceeds to pull up the slide deck.

Mr. Dixon states that these homes were under the old historic preservation plan and these homes were identified as important. He believed we should single out one or possibly two homes as test cases and then proceed with the designation process for them.

Mr. Metz showed the powerpoint slide deck with the photos of the historic homes.

There was a small discussion of having Mr. Metz check on 503 or 530 Garfield to determine the condition of the roof, gutters, and fascia. Mr. Metz agreed and stated that he would also have code enforcement check upon the home as well.

Mr. Dixon asked if there was any additional new news.

Mr. Emrick has asked to rescind his status as a member of the Historic Commission. He agreed to take this position unknowing of other conflicts he has and wants the spot to be filled by someone who can fully commit to the role.

Mr. Loukinas proposes the question of the need to have Mr. Emrick stay on the Historic Commission if there are already two planning commission members and if someone else can not fill the role for him as Planning Commission liaison.

Mr. Metz mentioned there is an interest to have all boards and commission meetings be video recorded.

Several members discuss the benefits and transparency of having the meeting video recorded. Mr. Emrick asks if the city has enough support to record the meetings. Mr. Brickler asks if we need a motion to support the commission meetings being recorded. Mr. Dixon proposes having a motion to have the meetings be recorded and to have city staff investigate if the City has the manpower to sufficiently operate the video recordings. Mr. Dixon asks all in favor. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Dixon and Mr. Loukinas ask for an update on the spreadsheet that tracks the violations on historic properties.

Mr. Metz said he does not know at this current time but will get back to them with an answer.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dixon moved for adjournment at 6:43 PM. Mr. Daniel seconds. The meeting was adjourned unanimously.



Matt Dixon  
Chairperson



James Metz  
City Planner

\*Full recording of the meeting available in the Planning/Zoning Department.