

Minutes

Historic District Commission

Thursday, July 23, 2008

7:00p.m.

Lower Hearing Conference Room

Members Present: Steiner, Chairman; Sternberg, Martocchia, Carter

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins

Public Present: See Attached Sign –In Form

1. June Minutes

Approved

2. Public Hearing Continuance– Certificate of Appropriateness – 80 Mount Auburn Street - Signage Replacement, Trustees of St. John’s United Methodist Church, Rudd Coffey

Rudd Coffey, representative of the applicant, informed that the location of the proposed sign was being changed to a more centralized place, approximately 20’ from the sidewalks pending approval and review by zoning. Steiner cautioned that the placement be visible.

Coffey noted that the proposed sign is a modernized version similar to those located in front of churches and institutions throughout Watertown. He reported that he was using granite posts for the proportional sign whose overall dimension is 8’ by 8’. He commented that the proposed design reflects the architecture elements of the church. He indicated that the sign will be attached with a bar to allow electricity to light the sign from its interior. He said that the sign would be made of wood or wood composite and that the lettering would be routed

out. He explained that the white areas are made of acrylic to allow light in the night and readability during the day. He informed that the bottom signs were flat but will be lit from the box above. The signs will read differently from the front and back. He indicated that the signs will be dark red or brown to match the accent color of the church.

Stenberg approved of the proposed sign. Martocchia thought it was a good choice and that it was attractive. Steiner thought it was good. He wanted it to be lit from the bottom. If not, then he recommended that it be illuminated at particular times. He suggested that they use a taller font for increased visibility. There was a discussion about font and case size.

Hayward offered assistance in selecting the optimal trees for the location and signage.

Sternberg approved of the sign being internally lit. Carter did not support the internal lighting. She noted that lighting was not part of the proposal and that the lighting component should be brought up at another time with appropriate information and application. Martocchia felt that the lighting should be left to the applicant.

Vote: Sternberg moved to approve the signage plan for St. John's Methodist Church, 80 Mount Auburn, as submitted (see attached) with latitude on the precise sign location on the front lawn up to the applicant. Carter seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Public Hearing Continuance (ongoing until March 2009) – Certificate of Appropriateness –113-135 Mount Auburn Street, on-going storefront improvements, MACM, LLC

Gerry Mazzeo, owner, presented plans for awnings for Sakura Massage located at 115 Mount Auburn Street. He informed that he would be hiring a contractor. He indicated that the awning will be smaller and lighter than the previous awning. He noted that the awnings will have a 2' vertical drop so not to hold snow. He noted that it will be 9' above ground, as approved by Nancy Scott in Zoning. Carter preferred that the awnings be lower similar to the height found on awnings located on Charles Street.

Steiner asked if the awnings would be the same color as the previous ones. Mazzeo responded that the color will be consistent with the building.

Vote: Sternberg moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the awnings to be located at 115 Mount Auburn Street for Sakura Massage. Carter seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Discussion – St. John’s Parish House 72 Mount Auburn Street

Coffey reported that St. John’s has approved the sale of 72 Mount Auburn Street for \$600,000. He informed that the selling of the property will provide needed capitol funds to improve the church. He reported that the property is zoned CB with much of the exterior detail gone. Coffey was looking for direction from the HDC as to the possible changes, additions and developments allowed at the site. Steiner noted he’d like to see the building preserved. Coffey indicated that a sale may depend on the church maintaining its back easement to parking. The church, however, limited the sale to 72 Mount Auburn Street only.

Sternberg would like to see the building preserved. Carter noted that discussion on a property is limited to a specific project for review and that a public hearing and proper public notification is required. Steiner likes the property. He was not supportive of great changes – no dormers, no picture windows. He was open to building out in the back to preserve the front.

Coffey inquired about parking lot developments at the site. Steiner responded that the building is the first building at the west entrance of the Historic District area and that any future development needs to blend in with the district.

5. Signage

Hayward informed that Cemusa will be placing a HD identifying sign on the bus shelter located in the district. Steiner was concerned about the lack of identifying signs about the HD. Hayward will contact Cemusa for detail design information.

Hayward noted that John Hecht was appreciative of the sign approval for his campaign headquarters.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm