

Regular Meeting Minutes  
City of Portage – Historic District Commission  
Wednesday – May 4, 2016  
Portage City Hall – Conference Room 2

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Meeting called to order at 8:15 AM.

**Present:** K. VanLonkhuyzen, C. Forrest, F. Grunert, S. Nemeth, J. Duniphin, E. Eklov, M. Deming

**Absent:** J. Lotz, R. Randall, J. Ebert

**Guests:** Laura Gherardi and Weston Hardy

**New Business:** Stop Work Order for 5260 Angling Road.

Homeowners had begun exterior work without receiving a Certificate of Approval from the Historic District Commission.

Since receiving the Stop Work Notice, homeowners had filled out an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with documentation attached, and had come to the meeting to discuss their application.

Homeowners said that they were not aware that any exterior modifications to one of the designated historic homes in Portage, had to go through the approval process.

Homeowners provided detailed documentation of the changes they were proposing, the materials they had ordered, and photographs of the current state of the property.

Unfortunately, the homeowners had already purchased the materials they planned to use. In addition, the front door had been changed in 2009. The front door and the siding chosen will “read” as a Craftsman style home, instead of an 1860’s Greek Revival farmhouse.

A motion was passed to approve the application as is, with the understanding that existing original siding will remain under the new siding, so that future owners are able to return the home to its original appearance, and that the windows that the homeowners are proposing be changed to a style more appropriate to a Greek Revival farmhouse should future window work be performed.

Homeowners were also advised that they will need to obtain a work permit from Community Development for porch repairs.

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## **HDC discussion after homeowners left.**

How does the HDC “get ahead” of situations such as this, where the homeowners have already committed significant financial resources to a project?

Realtors are “supposed” to inform new owners that there are restrictions for exterior changes.

Assessor is notified when properties change hands and there is a welcome packet sent out to new owners.

There is property information and legal information for homeowners on owning historic homes on the website for the City of Portage, but owners have to be directed to look there.

There is a need to verify that all new homeowners of historic properties receive an information packet from the HDC.

In this case, if the homeowners had contacted the HDC, they would have been told that the appropriate siding would have been white, and that the window trim would NOT have been white.

In appropriate changes to exteriors may make homes look “nice” but they do not reflect the historic contributions of an historic home.

Most homeowners do not have the necessary financial resources to restore historic homes back to original condition.

Until changes for tax incentives are made at the State level, it may be a lost battle.

## **Other New/Old Business:**

Preservation month presentation on May 26<sup>th</sup>, volunteers needed to help with setup.

Erica reported that there are currently 8 properties under investigation. Three of these properties are owned by Mick Lynch. One is new, 922 Osterhout. Is there something the HDC could do to help Mick Lynch?

Report on the Green-A-Thon. The School House was a big hit. Next year HDC should be better prepared and it would help to have signage.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 AM.

**Next meeting scheduled for June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.**

Respectfully submitted: Martha Deming