
M I N U T E S

BOARD: HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

MEMBERS PRESENT: SETH CORNISH, GARY LADER (VICE CHAIR), KENNETH LOUSH, PHILIP ROEDER (CHAIR), TONY SILVOY, BETH STARBUCK

MEMBERS ABSENT: CRAIG EVANS, ROGER HUDAK

STAFF PRESENT: JEFFREY LONG

PRESS PRESENT: LANI GOINS (BETHLEHEM PRESS)

VISITORS PRESENT: BRUCE CAMPBELL, TIM KLINE, JOHN TRAPANI, BRIAN RODENBACH, RAJ SARASWATI, NORM WILLIAMSON

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 21, 2020

The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on January 21, 2020 in Conference Room B-504, Bethlehem City Hall, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA. HCC Chair Philip Roeder called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Item #1

Election of HCC Officers:

HCC upon motion by Mr. Cornish and seconded by Mr. Silvoy unanimously approved Mr. Roeder to serve as HCC Chair.

HCC upon motion by Mr. Cornish and seconded by Mr. Silvoy unanimously approved Mr. Lader to serve as HCC Vice Chair.

Agenda Item #2 -- note: Mr. Lader confirmed conflict of interest with agenda item; abstained from discussion and resulting resolution

Property Location: 306 South New Street (ZEST)

Property Owner: Gateway 1, Inc.

Applicant: John Trapani

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: Construction of this semi-detached 6-story mixed use contemporary building located on the corner of South New Street and West Third Street was initiated in 2016. The primary facades on both streets are clad in brick on the 2nd through 4th floors, while the other floor levels and the corner are clad in glass and metal panels. During a previous HCC meeting on November 19, 2018, the Applicant received approval for a new sign to be installed along the north façade (facing West Third Street) centered within the 6th floor metal panel handrail segment where the building cantilevers over the corner entrance. The Applicant subsequently secured approval for signage composed of individual letters spelling out "ZEST" in white color installed on glass panels of the existing handrail assembly along the west façade of the upper-level outdoor dining terrace during HCC's meeting on September 16, 2019. As a reminder, HCC is mandated with preserving structures dating from the designated era of the Historic Conservation District (ca. 1895 - 1950); thus, this building is not considered a contributing structure to the District.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to install signage per elevations and plans.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships

that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- It is the purpose and intent of the City of Bethlehem to promote, protect, enhance and preserve historic resources and traditional community character for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation, protection and regulation of buildings and areas of historic interest or importance within the City.
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage and Awnings'** -- Care should be taken in mounting signs and awnings to minimize damage to historic materials. This includes reusing hardware or brackets from previous signs. If reusing existing hardware or attachment locations is not an option, select mounting locations that can be easily patched if the sign is removed. This includes locating holes in mortar joints rather than directly into bricks or masonry, which will facilitate repair if the sign is removed or relocated in the future.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: Though unclear from provided submittals, COA Application seems to indicate intent to replace existing menu boards currently located at two ground-level entrances with new signage ... one at South New Street entrance at East façade and one at entrance beneath bridge connector to adjacent parking garage at South façade. No record of previous HCC review and approval of existing menu boards could be located. Current application does not confirm dimensions of existing sign boards or installation heights above adjacent sidewalks. Proposed graphic for replacement signage includes "ZEST" company logo in large sans-serif, stenciled, all-capital letters along with words "6TH FLOOR" in smaller, bold, all capital sans-serif lettering above and "BAR+GRILLE" in smaller all capital stylized stencil lettering beneath ... all surrounded by stylized industrial cog. Supplemental sketches indicate each proposed sign measures 20-inches tall x 22-inches wide and set within 2-inch deep box frame with expressed installation mounts; sketches also indicate internal LED illumination. Unfortunately, supplements do not identify proposed materials, colors, detail of mounting devise, etc. for new signage. COA Application requires scale drawings with elevation views confirming overall building dimensions, along with relevant height and width dimensions of proposed signs, indications of proposed signage locations as well as clarification of signage materials and mounting methods. Unfortunately, these requirements have not been satisfied. It should be noted that HCC Signage Guidelines define signs as "words and images applied to signboards and awnings as well as individual letters pin-mounted to parapets or building friezes". Signage Guidelines continue by indicating that "signage for first floor businesses should be located below second floor windowsills ... (while) signs for upper-floor businesses may be lettered within upper-floor windows". Signage Guidelines also discourage use of box signs with internal illumination. Current proposal seems to fall outside various guideline definitions; thus, discussion is warranted to determine appropriateness. If HCC approves replacement signage, it should be noted that current menu board at South New Street entrance is mounted directly into existing brick masonry units, so repairs are required prior to installation of new signage. Replacement sign should be designed so that mounts can be installed into existing mortar joints to avoid future similar problems. Finally, Applicant should guarantee no conduits, raceways, transformers and/or junction boxes associated with new lighting will be visible on exterior façade.

Discussion: John Trapani and Norm Williamson represented proposal to install signage per elevations and plans. Applicant noted Craig Peiffer (Bethlehem's Zoning Officer) requests that new signs should replace existing menu signage in same size, location, height, etc. Mr. Roeder confirmed Historic Officer's statement that existing menu boards were never reviewed/approved by HCC. Ms. Starbuck inquired if existing signs are 20-inches tall x 22-inches wide so replacement signage will be same dimensions; Applicant confirmed existing signs are indeed 20-inches tall x 22-inches wide. Mr. Cornish pivoted to broader discussion about need for overall signage concept for entire building; Mr. Roeder recalled discussions during previous HCC meetings about desire for conversation with property owner to address overall signage concept,

noting successful approach with owner of Main Street Commons (downtown Bethlehem). Mr. Cornish continued that overall concept of historically appropriate signage is in best interest of building owner and various tenants. Applicant acknowledged difficulty in getting any guidance from building owner for desired signage.

Mr. Roeder inquired about approach for providing power to illuminate proposed signage; Applicant noted conduit for proposed illumination will be run from inside structure so no raceways or wire moldings will be visible on exterior façade. Ms. Starbuck noted conduits would become visible if/when current Applicant vacates building and new tenant is left to address resulting repairs; Applicant explained current 25-year lease guarantees his long-term presence at business location and stressed intention of maintaining signage upon installation.

Ms. Starbuck continued by inquiring about envisioned material(s) for proposed signage; Applicant confirmed new sign is aluminum box with white acrylic face of company logo along with black vinyl backing with internal illumination (max. 60-Watts) that provides overall glow within box. Mr. Cornish noted HCC design guidelines consider internally illuminated box signs inappropriate within Historic Conservation District. Mr. Roeder noted previous HCC approval of internally illuminated box signage for restaurant location at 313 East Third Street. Ms. Starbuck recalled approval of signage with internal illumination (late 2015) but noted approved sign is vertical metal box with simple cutouts of street numbers and no business logo; approved sign is valid for future tenants while current proposal is specific to Applicant and must be replaced with arrival of new tenant. Applicant noted HCC hesitation to approve box sign and offered alternative to simplify design as simple logo on frosted acrylic face off-set from building façade using existing pin-mounts and simple back-lit illumination. Ms. Starbuck inquired about visibility of back side of sign from inside building at glass storefront; Applicant noted need to install black backer at storefront location to avoid visibility from inside while sign at existing brick wall will receive no backer.

Public Commentary: None

Commission upon motion by Ms. Starbuck and seconded by Mr. Cornish adopted proposal that City Council issue Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work as presented, with modifications described as follows:

1. Proposal to install signage per elevations and plans at 306 South New Street was presented by John Trapani and Norm Williamson.
2. Approved new signage includes following details:
 - a. one new sign approved to replace existing menu board installed at South New Street entrance (at East façade) and one new sign to replace existing menu board installed at entrance beneath bridge connector to adjacent parking garage (South façade)
 - b. each replacement sign will measure 20-inches tall x 22-inches wide; to be installed using existing off-set mounting hardware (pin mounts) of current menu boards
 - c. replacement signage to include “ZEST” company logo in large sans-serif, stenciled, all-capital letters along with words “6TH FLOOR” in smaller, bold, all capital sans-serif lettering above and “BAR+GRILLE” in smaller all capital stylized stencil lettering beneath ... all surrounded by stylized industrial cog
 - d. replacement signs to be fabricated from frosted acrylic covered with approved graphics in applied black vinyl and LED lighting (max. 60 Watts) behind; sign at East façade to receive no backer so existing brick wall is illuminated while sign at South façade to receive black vinyl backer to avoid illumination of existing glass storefront
 - e. no conduits, raceways, transformers and/or junction boxes associated with new lighting will be visible on exterior façade

3. Applicant agreed to submit signage details reflecting approved revisions via City of Bethlehem for approval by Historic Officer and HCC Chair prior to purchase and installation.

Motion for proposed work was approved 5-0-1; abstention by Mr. Lader.

Agenda Item #3

Property Location: 601 East Fourth Street (Nest)

Property Owner: Bruce Campbell

Applicant: Bruce Campbell

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This free-standing brick structure is a 4-bay, 2 1/2-story commercial building with a simple gable roof with slate shingles. Aluminum siding was recently removed, and the original brick façade has been repainted. The front façade has a corner entrance and two windows of different sizes at the street level. It has a 2-story cross gable rear addition with a roof dormer along Pierce Street. Constructed ca. 1895, it was later modified to create separate entrances to segregate hotel guests above from a wine and liquor retail business at the entry level. A detached garage was constructed in the northwest corner of the rear yard sometime during the mid-twentieth century. Following HCC approval, the garage was demolished in preparation for a new rear patio. The main structure was originally Federal Revival or Queen Anne in style but with the loss of many original defining features it can no longer be categorized as exhibiting a specific architectural style.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to install corner signs.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage and Awnings'** -- see Agenda Item #1

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: During HCC meeting on Sept. 16, 2019 Applicant received various approvals for exterior improvements to main structure, demolition of detached garage and construction of new rear patio. Applicant also agreed to return to HCC at future date with required details for proposed signage. Current COA Application indicates new sign at northwest angled corner of new patio at intersection of Pierce Street and Evans Street as well as new blade sign at southwest corner of main structure at intersection of East Fourth Street and Pierce Street. Designs of both new signs seem similar, with "NEST" in upper-case, stylized serif lettering hovering above depiction of bird's nest support by inverted bird talons with "BAR & GRILLE" in similar but smaller upper-case, stylized serif lettering below. All lettering is bright white in color outlined in black while nest logo and textured background are combination of black, gray and white. Illumination of signage is implied, and mounting hardware for each sign is depicted; however, no real details are provided and depictions of hanging bracket for blade sign are inconsistent. Unfortunately, required details such as to-scale drawings with dimensions of new signs in relation to existing building, description of signage materials, understanding of installation methods, etc. are not provided so discussion is warranted before appropriateness can be determined. If HCC approves proposed new signage, following revisions are recommended:

- revise lettering color from bright white to warm white or ivory and remove black outline
- replace textured background with background in solid color
- integrate off-set pinstripe detail in contrasting color around perimeter of signs
- mounting hardware for corner sign at new patio wall should be installed in mortar joints rather than directly into stone masonry

- design of metal hanging bracket for blade sign at main building should be simplified to match other similar examples within Historic Conservation District
- conduits, raceways, transformers and/or junction boxes associated with new lighting cannot visible on exterior façade

Discussion: Bruce Campbell and Brian Rodenbach represented proposal to install corner signs. Applicant confirmed both signs measure 24-inches tall x 32-inches wide. In response to Historic Officer's initial assessment, Applicant noted company logo indeed has brick pattern background and prefers to retain with new signage; Applicant continued by agreeing to remove black outline from lettering and to revise color of lettering and graphics from bright white to ivory. Mr. Roeder noted proposed hanging bracket for blade sign is too ornamental for Historic Conservation District but expressed appreciation of integrated lighting; Applicant agreed to simplify hanging bracket to comply with design guidelines (Historic Officer provided Applicant with depictions of acceptable brackets from guidelines). Mr. Roeder continued by requesting pin stripe border around sign perimeter in satisfaction of design guidelines; Applicant expressed disappointment about required border, so Mr. Roeder suggested metal band around sign edges as alternative. Mr. Roeder noted HCC motion for approval will be contingent upon sign fabricator submitting revised signage proofs for review prior to fabrication. Ms. Starbuck expressed hesitation for approving proposed signage, especially with brick pattern background and lack of any color; Applicant responded that proposed colors are black and ivory. Mr. Lader inquired about proposed corner signage at new patio wall, noting provided depiction is not to scale and appears to be leaning against new stone wall; Mr. Lader continued that new sign should be small enough to allow for stone wall to be visible around entire perimeter of sign (not extending from top to bottom of wall). Applicant confirmed stone wall is indeed taller than 24 inches so sign will be centered within height of new wall. Applicant noted desire to install signage within niche of new wall; various HCC members expressed preference that sign should be installed onto vertical surface of stone patio wall with pin-mounts into existing mortar joints to facilitate future signage revisions, as needed. Applicant continued that patio sign will be illuminated from below via metal channel. Applicant concluded by confirming new signs are to be fabricated from High Density Urethane (HCU) boards, with patio sign at 1-inch thick while blade sign is 2-inches thick.

Public Commentary: None

Commission upon motion by Mr. Cornish and seconded by Mr. Loush adopted proposal that City Council issue Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work as presented, with modifications described as follows:

1. Proposal to install corner signs at 601 East Fourth Street was presented by Bruce Campbell and Brian Rodenbach.
2. Approved new signage includes following details:
 - a. one new wall sign to be installed at northwest angled corner of new rear patio at intersection of Pierce Street and Evans Street and one new blade sign to be installed above entrance at southwest corner of main structure at intersection of East Fourth Street and Pierce Street
 - b. each sign measures 24-inches tall x 32-inches wide and to be fabricated from High Density Urethane (HDU) boards; patio sign is 1-inch thick and double-sided blade sign is 2-inches thick
 - c. design of both new signs is uniform:
 - i. "NEST" in large upper-case, stylized serif lettering hovers above depiction of bird's nest support by inverted bird talons along with "BAR & GRILLE" in similar but smaller upper-case, stylized serif lettering below
 - ii. all lettering is warm white or ivory in color (with no outline in black color) while nest logo and recessed background in brick pattern are combination of black and warm white
 - iii. each sign to receive ¼-inch wide perimeter border in black color

- d. patio sign to be installed using pin mounts into existing mortar joints and illuminated by lighting bracket from below while blade sign to be hung from metal bracket of simple design with integrated illumination similar to other approved brackets within Historic Conservation District and painted black; light levels for each new sign limited to max. 60 Watts (incandescent lighting)
 - e. no conduits, raceways, transformers and/or junction boxes associated with new lighting will be visible on exterior façade
3. Applicant agreed to submit signage details reflecting approved revisions via City of Bethlehem for approval by Historic Officer and HCC Chair prior to purchase and installation; two designs are required before final signage approval is given: one with brick pattern background (as appears on company logo) and one with solid background with no brick pattern.

Motion for proposed work was approved 5-1; dissention by Ms. Starbuck, based upon opinion that brick background of proposed signage (rather than solid background) is inappropriate and will not read well from public right-of-way.

Mr. Roeder introduced two walk-in items:

Property Location: 17 East Third Street

Property Owner: Charles Buck

Applicant: Tim Kline, Alvin H. Butz, Inc.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to replace existing windows at front façade due to fire damage.

Discussion: Tim Kline represented proposal to replace existing windows at front façade due to fire damage. Applicant noted fire occurred on Saturday, January 11th and explained intent to retain existing window openings but to replace current windows damaged by smoke, fire and water with more appropriate windows. Applicant confirmed six current windows at second and third floor levels are 1-over-1 Andersen (brand) double-hung replacements installed in mid-2000s by Owner, which also included modified heads and sills (to accommodate contemporary standard window size in older window opening) along with exterior aluminum coil stock trim. Applicant continued by describing intent to replace all six damaged windows and trim with new Marvin (brand) aluminum clad 1-over-1 double-hung windows; blocking at heads and sills to be removed so new windows fit original openings. Applicant also reviewed provided trim detail of new extruded aluminum sub-sill and replacement flat exterior casing in 'Coconut Cream' color to match existing trim elsewhere at front façade. Mr. Roeder inquired about dimensional difference between existing and proposed blocking; Applicant responded that current blocking is 6 inches (at top and bottom) while replacement blocking at head is approx. 2 ½ inches while blocking at sill will be flush with existing stone sill ... resulting in overall 9 ½-inch increase in glass surface area with new replacement windows.

Applicant shared interior images of existing windows, noting third floor windows were originally arched at top (half-round trim still visible) but detail was changed over time resulting in current window configuration on exterior. Ms. Starbuck inquired if new replacement windows can re-establish original arched top detail; Applicant responded that insurance company is only reimbursing Owner for repairs in-kind to existing features and not to recreate previously lost details. Mr. Roeder expressed appreciation that proposed replacement windows represent more appropriate alternative to current (damaged) windows. Mr. Lader inquired if Applicant would consider profiled elements for replacement trim, noting original windows would not have flat but rather profiled trim. Applicant repeated statement that insurance company is only reimbursing Owner for in-kind repairs to existing features (noting current trim is flat) and also explained that exterior awnings are to be retained so flat trim is more conducive as awning attachment points.

Public Commentary: None

Commission upon motion by Mr. Roeder and seconded by Mr. Lader adopted proposal that City Council issue Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work described as follows:

1. Proposal to replace existing windows at front façade due to fire damage at 17 East Third Street was presented by Tim Kline.
2. Approved renovations include following details:
 - a. remove six inappropriate and damaged Andersen 1-over-1, double-hung window units (including associated blocking at heads and sills as well as exterior aluminum coil stock trim) at second and third floor levels at front façade
 - b. install six new Marvin aluminum clad 1-over-1, double-hung window units within resulting openings at second and third floor levels at front façade; each window opening to receive new extruded aluminum sub-sill and replacement flat exterior casing in 'Coconut Cream' color to match existing trim

Motion for proposed work was unanimously approved.

Property Location: 213 West Fourth Street (Dunkin Donuts)

Property Owner: Raj Saraswati

Applicant: Raj Saraswati

Discussion: Raj Saraswati requested suggestions from HCC to improve appearance of trash corral, noting existing corral was previously constructed by third party and was never reviewed/approved by HCC. Mr. Roeder cited examples of trash corrals previously approved by HCC along West Fourth Street, South New Street and Wyandotte Street, noting most receptacles involve no trash can but rather business owners deposit trash bags inside corrals. Applicant expressed familiarity with HCC-approved examples but noted they are too small for his purposes; trash collection from large-format cans typically occurs 4 times each week so solution must be robust enough to withstand constant use. Mr. Cornish recalled elaborate (and expensive) trash corral at Sun Inn Courtyard (Bethlehem's northside) received HARB approval but high fence does not deter people from tossing trash up and over fence. Mr. Cornish also noted HARB-approved trash corral behind Apollo Grill (Bethlehem's northside) but height of corral might be too short for current Applicant. Ms. Starbuck suggested wood fencing as appropriate solution; Applicant noted previous corral constructed of wood fencing did not survive more than three months. Mr. Lader suggested composite lumber (Trex or comparable) as possible acceptable alternative to wood fencing and appropriate replacement to current vinyl slats. Mr. Lader continued by also offering solution with garage-door aesthetic but constructed from durable materials; Mr. Cornish noted some garage door firms offer solutions in composite lumber options but requested any proposal from Applicant be reviewed as part of building application process to ensure structural stability as well as satisfaction of construction regulations. Mr. Silvoy suggested Applicant could cooperate with nearby ArtsQuest to cover existing trash bins with something creative and decorative rather than installing corrals around dumpsters. Applicant repeated desire for corrals to discourage unwanted dumping by third parties.

No motion for HCC approval; Applicant agreed to consider various options and return to HCC at future date for continued discussion.

New Business:

Ms. Starbuck commented on-going issue of incomplete COA Applications, noting need for better screening within City's Planning Office to ensure requirements are satisfied prior to integration into subsequent HCC meeting agenda. Mr. Roeder recalled recent internal discussion with Craig Peiffer (City's Zoning Officer) for assistance in screening COA Applications. Ms. Starbuck suggested applicants should be presented with copy of relevant design guidelines as part of application form rather than simply instructing them to reference City of Bethlehem website. Mr. Cornish inquired if HCC members could assist with request to improve application procedures; Mr. Roeder encouraged fellow HCC members to speak directly with Darlene Heller (City's

Director of Planning) about concerns. Mr. Lader inquired if sample form could accompany blank COA Applications to assist applicants; Mr. Roeder recalled previous attempts with sample applications but noted various options within application led to more confusion rather than providing needed clarity.

Mr. Long inquired about status of one open HCC position, noting vacancy since January 2019; Mr. Roeder also expressed concern, noting occasional risk for not making quorum especially during summer vacation months. Mr. Roeder agreed to inquire yet again with relevant parties about vacant HCC position but also encouraged fellow HCC members to speak directly with Darlene Heller about on-going issue.

General Business: Minutes from HCC meeting on December 16, 2019 were unanimously approved by all in attendance, with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

There was no further business; HCC meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY:

Jeffrey Long
Historic Officer
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District
Mt. Airy Historic District