

**Historic District Commission
Minutes Of May 1, 2024**

151 Martin Street, City Commission Room 205, Birmingham, MI

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held May 1, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Dustin Kolo; Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Member Mary Jaye

Absent: Chair John Henke; Alternate Board Member Steven Lemberg

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of March 6, 2024

05-09-24

Motion by Ms. Debbrecht

Seconded by Ms. Lang to approve the HDC Minutes of March 6, 2024 as submitted.

Motion carried, 7 5-0.¹

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Dukas, Kolo, Lang, Jaye, Deyer, Willoughby Lemberg ²

Nays: None

3) Courtesy Review

4) Historic Design Review

A. 137 W. Maple – Field Building

PD Dupuis presented the item and answered informational questions from the HDC. He clarified that standard three did not apply.

Chris Longe, architect, spoke on behalf of the project.

HDC member comments were as follows:

- Even though the addition would be set back, the mass still provided a bit of a challenge in the middle of the block. It may still seem tall.
- The existence of the roof may make it seem like a five-story building. The HDC has never approved a proposal without all the materials shown.
- Preservation brief 14 advises that additions are very rare on two-story buildings. When additions are added to two-story buildings, usually it is only one additional story. That

¹As corrected at the June 5, 2024 meeting.

²As corrected at the June 5, 2024 meeting.

said, the rear of this building also would face larger buildings, and the addition will be substantially set back. This proposal might be more aptly described as infill than an addition. These renderings were helpful and provided realistic sightlines. This might be the only building on Maple with space behind the building.

- A color rendering of the view from the street level would also be helpful.
- This was a creative proposal. In order to preserve historic buildings, they must make economic sense. If they were to be limited to two stories, those buildings would not last because there would be no demand for them. The design was well done, and the proposal respects the historic building.
- This was much better than another proposal for a nearby building that had been denied about a year prior.
- This kind of design might start a trend.
- This proposal could set a positive precedent. It manages growth in a smart way and the preservation standards support the proposal.
- Part of the charm of the downtown is that it is only two stories. Financially-sound businesses can still occur in two-story buildings.
- A two-story addition might be worth considering in order to address some members' hesitation around the massing.

05-10-24

Motion by Mr. Deyer

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to postpone the project to a date certain of June 5, 2024.

Motion carried, 7 5-0.³

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Dukas, Kolo, Lang, Jaye, Deyer, Willoughby Lemberg ⁴

Nays: None

5) Sign Review

6) Study Session

A. Historic Preservation Master Plan

PD Dupuis provided an update on the item and answered informational questions from the HDC.

HDC member comments were as follows:

- Performing condition assessments would be worthwhile.
- The HDC would help in performing condition assessments. The HDC should be briefly trained on what specifically they are looking for in assessments.
- The HDSC could also assist in performing condition assessments.
- Reaching out to the building owners and asking them to correct issues before involving code enforcement would be most appropriate.
- The roundtable letter should include a snippet about what the historic preservation master plan is intended to do.

³As corrected at the June 5, 2024 meeting.

⁴As corrected at the June 5, 2024 meeting.

- The roundtable letter should also provide a bit of information the City will be seeking from historic property owners.
- It would be helpful to hear how people feel about voluntary versus suggested historic designations.
- Karen Sellenraad, wrote a letter dated March 26, 2026, that was included in the evening's agenda packet regarding the historic preservation master plan. Ms. Sellenraad could likely help advocate for historic preservation efforts in the community.

7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication

A. Pre-Application Discussion

1. 163 W. Maple – The Last Bean

PD Dupuis briefly updated the HDC on historic material that had been removed from the site by prior owner.

B. Draft Agenda

C. Staff Reports

- 1. Administrative Sign Approvals**
- 2. Administrative Approvals**
- 3. Demolitions**
- 4. Action List**

D. Communications

- 1. The Birmingham Plan 2040 – Key Actions**
- 2. Birmingham Green: Healthy Climate Plan**

8) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the HDC motioned to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.



Nick Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist