



City of Powell, Ohio
Historic Downtown Advisory Commission
Tom Coffey, Chairman

Marge Bennett

Larry Coolidge

Richard Fusch

Deb Howell

Chris Meyers, AIA, Architectural Advisor

MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 3, 2010

A regular meeting of the Powell Historic Downtown Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice-Chairman Larry Coolidge at 6:15 p.m. on Thursday, June 3, 2010. Other Commissioners present included Marge Bennett, Richard Fusch and Deb Howell. Chairman Tom Coffey was absent. Eric Fischer, Development Planner; and Chris Meyers, Architectural Advisor, were present.

HEARING OF VISITORS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Ms. Bennett moved to approve the meeting minutes from August 20, 2009. Ms. Howell seconded the motion. By unanimous consent, the minutes were approved.

MOTION: Ms. Bennett moved to approve the meeting minutes from May 20, 2010. Mr. Coolidge seconded the motion. Mr. Fusch abstained. By the unanimous consent of the remaining members, the minutes were approved.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Applicant: George Stefanidis with Easy Street Cafe.
Location: 5 South Liberty
Zoning: DB, Downtown Business District
Request: Certificate of Appropriateness for outdoor seating area tables & chairs, gate(s) and fencing.

Eric Fischer, Development Planner, said on Tuesday night City Council approved the right-of-way use for this application. He said the applicant is here seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the chairs and tables, fencing, and removal of landscaping in order to install fencing.

George Stefanidis, Easy Street Café, applicant, said he would like to put some seating out on the sidewalk as noted on the drawings. He said a gate would be installed to the left coming off S.R. 750 toward Liberty. He indicated the specifications of the type of fencing and gate to be used on the patio. He said the gate will have an automatic closure with magnetic security. Mr. Stefanidis said he would like to permanently mount the fencing and gate to the sidewalk pavers. He said the patio will be dressed with umbrellas and landscaped with baskets of flowers all the way around. He said he will also add pots of flowers up against the building between the tables. He said he wants to make it roomy and pleasant. Mr. Coolidge asked if Council approved this use. Mr. Fischer said they did. He indicated the patio area on the site plan. He provided minutes from the Council meeting which indicated they approved permanent mounting of the fence.

Chris Meyers, Architectural Advisor, asked about the materials of the tables and chairs. Mr. Stefanidis said they are hard plastic composite in the dark gray color as shown and they are very durable. He said he would like to use umbrellas on the patio but not on each table. Mr. Coolidge asked if the tables will be a solid color with no lettering. Mr. Stefanidis said they will all be a uniform solid color. Mr. Coolidge asked about the color of the umbrellas. Mr. Stefanidis said he has some from the former Maca restaurant that are a light brown/tan color and he will probably order more of the same. Mr. Fischer said the Commission approved those previously. Mr. Stefanidis said the tables and chairs are new but they are the same style as the old Maca tables.

Mr. Meyers asked if the tables and chairs will be stored somewhere else in the off-season. Mr. Stefanidis said they will be totally gone in storage. Mr. Meyers asked if the flower baskets will be mounted onto the fence and if there will be signage or banners of any type. Mr. Stefanidis said the baskets will be on the fence and there will be no signage. Mr. Meyers asked about lighting such as candles on the patio tables. Mr. Stefanidis said he thinks the street lighting will be perfect and he won't need any other lighting. He said the windows from the side of the building will also help. Mr. Meyers suggested he not try to over-illuminate the patio. He asked if the fence will be three foot in height. Mr. Stefanidis said it will. Mr. Meyers said the applicant may want to check with his architect because 21 tables on the patio with two seats per table pushes it to a pretty high number of patrons on the patio. He said they may want to check the dimensions between the tables to make sure there is a good path that meets the building code. He asked if there is a ramp at the sidewalk that goes up to a single step. Mr. Stefanidis said the ramp is all the way to the left and that is where the handicap access is located. He said it turns into a single step at the gate. Mr. Meyers asked about the plans for replacing the ground surface where the landscaping is removed. Mr. Stefanidis said they will add pavers that match the existing pavers.

Mr. Meyers said this type of restaurant is best suited to be visible to the street so his hope is they have as much activity on the street corner because that will be what makes the community vibrant. He said he has seen the plans for the interior and that is fantastic. He said they should encourage as many people as possible to sit on the patio because that will be their best marketing. Mr. Stefanidis said he loves the building itself because it reminds him of the one he has in German Village: the high ceilings, the old building, the corner, old neighborhood and people walking to different shops. He said he will totally dress it up and beautify the whole corner as a focus point. Mr. Meyers said he thinks they have done a good job with this.

Mr. Fischer asked if the fence will be permanently installed and up year-round. Mr. Stefanidis said it will be installed permanently but during the winter all of the tables and chairs will be taken away and stored properly.

Ms. Howell said her only concern is the number of tables but as long as that has been passed by code it is alright. She said it sounds like he is adding plants and that takes care of her other concern about the loss of landscaping. She said she is fine with this proposal.

Ms. Bennett asked if the porch or the ramp is the main entrance to the restaurant. Mr. Stefanidis said the ramp is the main entrance. Ms. Bennett asked if they will have seating on the porch. Mr. Stefanidis said they will. Ms. Bennett said she loves the old building too. She asked that Mr. Stefanidis keep the "finger" that is added on the front of the building. Mr. Stefanidis said he loves it and it will stay. Ms. Bennett said she can provide lots of stories about the building when he has time. Mr. Stefanidis said he would love to have photographs of the building from back in the day. He said he would add them to the interior of this building as well as the German Village restaurant. Ms. Bennett said many businesses come to look at the pictures held by the Historical Society and there is also a great photo on the cover of the 50th Anniversary publication. Mr. Fischer said the City has the photograph in digital storage. Ms. Bennett said she likes this plan.

Mr. Fusch said he thinks this is a great design and he likes it very much. He said the comments of Mr. Meyers were quite appropriate; they need to get as many people out on the street as possible and this seems to be the way to do it. Mr. Stefanidis said he will do everything he can to protect and respect Powell's history.

Mr. Coolidge asked that the applicant look for an alternative way so they can take the fence down during the winter when they remove the patio furniture. He said they could possibly put piping in the ground so they can pull the fencing out during the winter time. He said it is a large area to have empty. Mr. Fischer said he has not discussed this with the Public Service Director but typically they use a bobcat to remove snow from the sidewalks. He said he will need to discuss this further with the building department as well. Mr. Coolidge said it seems a shame to leave it blank during the off-season. Mr. Fischer said they may be able to put sleeves in the ground so the posts can be installed on a semi-permanent basis. He said Staff recommends approval of this application but they are in discussion with the owner of the building, Mr. Ruma, about enclosing the dumpster in something appropriate to the downtown. He said the owner does not technically have to do that but to avoid another meeting Staff would like the motion to include

approval for Staff to work with the landowner about doing a proper dumpster enclosure. Mr. Fischer said this is a legal, non-conforming use and they are not required to pave or enclose the dumpster because they have not made any changes to the outside of the building. He said Mr. Stefanidis is in support of the dumpster enclosure as well.

Mr. Coolidge said he received a phone call from someone who asked about what plans have been made about the old signage from J & R Designs and Maca. Mr. Fischer said once everything is set, Mr. Stefanidis has a sign contractor that will make use of the existing square sign framing as a part of the approved sign plan for the structure. He said they have spoken with Staff and are working out a sign detail for the front of the building that is more appropriate to the massing. He said that will be considered at a different meeting.

Mr. Coolidge opened this item to public comment. Hearing none, he closed the public comment session.

MOTION: Mr. Fusch moved to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for George Stefanidis, Easy Street Café for on-sidewalk seating, gates, and for Staff to work with the landowner regarding a dumpster enclosure. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion.

Mr. Coolidge moved to amend the motion to add the wording so it reads: "for on-sidewalk seating, gates, to move landscaping, add pavers, and work with Staff to replace the landscaping and regarding the addition of a dumpster enclosure." Mr. Fusch seconded the motion.

VOTE on the amendment to the motion: Y = 4 N = 0

VOTE on the motion: Y = 4 N = 0

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Meyers said he has an architectural opinion about the Historic District. He said there has been such great effort toward character and detail in the new buildings and they have been well done projects. He said the one thing that sticks out as a sore thumb are the "fire connection" signs on every one of the new buildings. He said that signs are so overly done for what is necessary to identify pipe connections for water to feed sprinkler systems. He said the address at 8 North Liberty has a sign that is probably seven square feet in size. Mr. Meyers said Building Code refers to Fire Code and it essentially states that the Fire Chief can do whatever he wants. He said architects and designers are always struggling because whatever the Chief wants, the Chief gets. He said their intention is not to compromise safety or make things difficult for a Fire Department.

Mr. Meyers said they may want to put together a nice letter from their group that encourages the Fire Chief to address this issue in other ways rather than throwing big graphics on the buildings. Mr. Fischer said he does not think a letter will go far. He said there are Fire Department requirements within the Township that are a little extraordinary and more than what is necessary for safety purposes. He said he believes the City Council can mandate that the signs stay at a specific size but he will need to speak to the Law Director. Mr. Fischer said Staff is in agreement with Mr. Meyers but they will require direction from the Commission to send the matter to Council. Mr. Meyers said they just finished a project of a 30-story building in downtown NYC and the standpipe sign is about one-quarter of the size of the one on 8 N. Liberty.

Mr. Coolidge said he agrees with Mr. Meyers but he does not want the Commission to be in the position of superseding State Code on this type of requirement. Mr. Meyers said it would not supersede State Code but rather help in the matter of interpretation. He said he believes City Council can help find a compromise. Mr. Meyers said code does not require a particular dimension but instead says it should be signage in contrasting colors that is readily visible and from that point it is up to the Fire Chief. He said it may be a sign company setting the size. Mr. Coolidge asked who approves the signage. Mr. Fischer said the signage is required by code and the Fire Department requires a final fire inspection as part of the approval process. He said he is unsure about how it is approved through the Department's hierarchy. Mr. Meyers said the only two items in the State Building Code that are required for building department submittals: 1) that there is signage indicating where the fire connection is located; and 2) that a knock box be located at the front of the building. He said on top of that there are other Fire Code issues that must be met before a building permit is approved. Mr. Meyers said they have to submit CAD drawings to the Fire Departments so that on the way to the fire they can pull up the drawings that indicate the fire connections.

Mr. Coolidge said someone would have to be in charge of approving the final size of the signage. He said he would support changes that would make this type of signage smaller. Mr. Meyers said the HDAC would not want to set the size of the signage because of the liability involved. Mr. Fischer said if the Commission recommends it, Staff can look into it and report back to them. He said they can also go speak with representatives of the Fire Department and work out an agreement that could be submitted to Council. Mr. Coolidge said he would think the HDAC would go along with anything that would make the signs smaller.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

DATE MINUTES APPROVED: September 16, 2010


Larry Coolidge
Vice-Chairman


Date

