

**Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes**

DATE:	Thursday, Sept, 07, 2023
TIME:	5:30 pm-7:00pm
PLACE	Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development- 2 nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI

Call to Order

- Vice Chair Jerome called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:37 PM

Roll Call

- Secretary Clarke conducted roll call:
 - **Commissioners present:** Kim Clarke, Anne Stevenson, Angela Jo Oehrli, Alec Jerome, James Mann, Katie Remensnyder
 - **Commissioners absent with notice:** Alice Ralph, Peter Kelley
 - **Staff present:** Melinda Schmidt, Kat Slocum

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:

Vice Chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. Correction to add citizen participation. Commissioner Mann moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Oehrli seconded the motion and with no further discussion, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: July, 06 2023:

Vice Chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none. Commissioner Stevenson moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Clarke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Participation: The HDC welcomed Sally Louis and her partner Mark Sandstrom. Sally introduced herself as the owner of Groves Farm.

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: Vice Chair Jerome thanked Sally Louis for her attendance and invited her to speak following the Groves Farm National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination review.

Application Reviews:

Vice Chair Jerome called the **4151 Thornoaks** Application item to order.

a. HDC staff introduced the application. The owner of 4151 Thornoaks, Mr. James Bardwell, would like to remove existing damaged deck and replace it with a new deck that will bring the structure up to code. The proposed new deck will have an extended footprint of 8-foot on the east side, which will fuse the existing deck to two cantilevered sections. According to the application, it is not possible to maintain the existing footprint without extending the deck surface 8 feet east, as the plumb line drop from the existing east deck edge impedes access to the shed door. Staff showed pictures of the proposed plans and materials. Commissioners discussed why the expansion was justified and requested clarification on what would be done to the lattice work beneath the deck. Commissioner Stevenson noted that the deck is not original and agreed with Commissioners on the need for the lattice work to be replaced and made tidier. Commissioner Remensnyder noted that the deck replacement extension should not have joists attaching directly to the chimney. Commissioner Clarke moved to approve the deck with future administrative approval for lattice work following conversation with the owner. Commissioner Oehrli seconded. The commissioners made a unanimous motion:

“to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for a deck replacement and 8-foot east side extension at 4151 Thornoaks, as submitted with plans, specifications, pictures, and proposed materials including: Dekorators Vault Dusk decking that is a close match to the existing aged cedar color, and Trex Signature Glass Railings matching a section of existing upper deck railings with a mix of glass and post. HDC approval of this work is based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation number 9.”

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

As part of this approval, the HDC clarifies that the deck may not be directly joisted to the chimney on the east elevation, to safeguard the integrity of the chimney.

Business and Staff Reports:

Items for Consideration by Commission

- Groves Farm National Register Nomination: HDC staff presented the nomination packet. Sally Louis, the current owner, shared her personal experience on the farm including her continued relationship with the Groves family, her work to preserve the barns, and her wish for the site to be protected in the future.
- Commissioners applauded the effort and work of Sally Louis and noted the impressive notes and documentation of the site. Commissioners stated that the age of the barns may merit the nomination to be at the state level rather than local level. The HDC encouraged the owner to explore the option of becoming a historic district to protect the site.
- Staff will send commissioner notes to the SHPO. Along with the signed nomination.

Local Historic Districts

- Wild-Frey Farm:
 - The Board of Commissioners will consider the Wild-Frey Farm Local Historic District Ordinance at two consecutive meetings in September. The first reading was on September 6th, and second reading will be September 20th. Staff will attend the readings. The BOC will make a designation decision at the September 20th meeting.
- Thornoaks:
 - Siding has been installed at 4071 Thornoaks Drive. The siding is not in compliance with the COA issued in February 2022. Staff discussed next steps with the HDC including advice from corporation council. Commissioners discussed the unapproved work and concerns about the appearance of the front façade. Commissioner Stevenson moved to:
 - *“have HDC staff contact the owner of 4071 Thornoaks Drive to modify work completed in violation of the specific requirements of the previously issued COA (Feb 10th, 2022). WCHDC requires that 1) the siding on the front façade be restored to its original diagonal configuration, 2) the front door restored to previous iteration as of Feb X, and 3) removal of belt course. These unapproved changes to the structure, which includes installation of vertical siding, a belt course, and a new door, are not in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards 2 and 5.*

Commissioner Clarke seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Northfield Township MPDF CLG Grant

- The draft RFQ has been reviewed by NTHS and is with SHPO for comment.

Washtenaw County Updates

- Kat Slocum was recently hired as the new Historic Preservation Specialist for the Office of Community and Economic Development.

- The County is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) Director position. Let staff know if you have any questions.

Adjournment: Commissioner Stevenson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm. Commissioner Oehrli seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for Oct. 05, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development 2nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI

DRAFT