

**City of Lewisburg**  
**Historic Landmark Commission Regular Session**  
**Meeting Minutes — March 11, 2024, 5:00 p.m.**  
**942 Washington Street West, Lewisburg, WV**  
**Paul L. Cooley Council Chambers**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson David Craddock; Commissioners Donna Johns, William Deegans, Adrienne French and Clifford Gillilan; Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham; HLC consultant Michael Mills; Recording Officer Tina Alvey.

**ABSENT:** None.

**VISITORS:** Mayor Beverly White, City Manager Misty Hill, Jim Morgan, Tom Kilionski, Sam Argabright, Karin Kelly Tronche, Bernard Tronche, Josh Adamo, Siobhan Winters, John Wilson (via telephone).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairperson David Craddock.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Clifford Gillilan moved acceptance of minutes from the meeting held on February 12, 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Donna Johns and approved on a 5-0 vote.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Craddock advised people in the gallery to address any questions concerning agenda items only to members of the Commission and not to engage in a back-and-forth with applicants or their representatives. There were no public comments during the allotted time.

*James Morgan, 111 Walnut Street. Widen, level and extend existing driveway to the garage with same gravel and add one additional solar panel in the same style and color as the existing three solar panels.*

The applicant said the existing driveway needs to be widened to allow access to the garage now that the Walnut Street house has been sold.

Johns made a motion to approve the application to widen the driveway, seconded by Commissioner William Deegans, and approved on a 5-0 vote.

The second issue raised on the application — the addition of a fourth solar panel to a three-panel array already in place — was denied without a vote when a motion by Johns to approve the additional panel died for lack of a second. Discussion of this issue revolved around a change in HLC guidelines concerning required screening of solar panels; the guideline change occurred subsequent to the original installation (which is “grandfathered in”). The applicant was advised that all of the HLC guidelines are currently online, and Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham said she would forward the document to Morgan.

***Tom and Jane Hill, 1459 Washington Street East. Demolition of back addition and rebuilding a larger ADA-compliant addition.***

Representing the applicant, contractor Josh Adamo said the proposed new addition to the Hills' home would contain an accessible bedroom suite on the building's first floor. He said the house has been added on to at least seven times, including the most recent addition, which will be demolished and replaced with the new suite. The latest addition will match the lap siding, roof and windows of the existing house.

Gillilan moved approving the project, seconded by Commissioner Adrienne French. The vote to approve was 5-0.

***Love Child, 933 Washington Street West. New sign.***

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, Siobhan Winters said the new sign at the business will be attached to the existing bracket.

The application was approved 5-0, following a motion by Deegans, seconded by Johns.

***John Wilson, 1017 Washington Street West. Brick and siding replacement on the building.***

Speaking via telephone, the applicant pointed out that the oft-damaged building in question has been hit by a turning truck yet again. He asked to be allowed to change the siding on the side of the building. HLC consultant Michael Mills explained that the proposed aluminum siding will cover the wall down to the point where a strip of brick begins. The brick will match the natural brick already on the building's facade, and the siding will be the same size and profile as the existing siding, Wilson said.

Upon motion by Gillilan, seconded by French, the application was approved on a 5-0 vote.

***Karin Tronche, 284 Lee Street North. Request to demolish the existing house on the property and build a new home on the site, or restore the existing cottage.***

Applicants Karin and Bernard Tronche, who recently acquired the property in question, advised the Commission that inspections conducted subsequent to the filing of their application have led them to realize it is "probably better" to tear down the existing house and build a replica of the historic structure in its place. Contractor Sam Argabright supported their assertion, saying a full interior gut would be necessary, as well as a full foundation replacement and a new roof, in order to make the existing house habitable. When all of the damaged material is removed, only around 20 percent of the building's original materials would remain, according to Argabright.

Mills said the real issue is the house's faltering foundation, and that with enough money, the existing house is "savable." Strongly supporting Mills' assessment, Deegans said authorizing

demolition of the ca.1920-24 home sets a precedent that is unacceptable because “it just comes down to money.”

Argabright argued that money is not the only issue driving the Tronches’ decision; he said the length of time a rehab project would likely take is also a factor. The Tronches said they no longer feel repairs will be practical, given Argabright’s assessment. “We can’t live in this house,” Karin Tronche said.

Mills conceded that reconstruction of a historic structure is an “allowable act” under certain guidelines, but he cautioned that if many other property owners took advantage of such a precedent, Lewisburg would risk losing its unique character.

French pointed out that the HLC only holds sway over the exterior of the city’s historic properties. She questioned how much of the existing house’s historically significant features could be salvaged if everything from the foundation to the roof had to be replaced for the sake of health and safety. Saying he understood Deegans’ position, Gillilan nonetheless noted that the cost of a rehab would likely deter anyone from tackling preservation of this particular house.

After receiving assurances from Argabright, the Tronches and their architect regarding the anticipated attention to detail in reconstructing a duplicate of the existing house, Gillilan made a motion to approve the requested demolition, contingent upon the HLC’s okay at a later date of the pending application for reconstruction and approval of the materials to be used to create an “accurate reconstruction” of the historic house. Johns seconded the motion, which passed on a 4-1 vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Upon motion by Gillilan, approved 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Alvey  
Recording Officer