

CITY OF AURORA  
OHIO  
**LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
Meeting Minutes  
November 25, 2008

The Aurora Landmark Commission met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 25, 2008, in the Council Chambers of Aurora City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman John Kudley.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present::	John Kudley Richard Fetzer Melanie Miguel-Courtad (arrived 7:03) Tom Spape
Absent:	Sue Sutton
Also Present:	Ron Lowe, Advisor to Landmark Commission Susan Dombeck, Secretary

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Spape noted that he arrived late at the October meeting, but the minutes have him listed as absent. Ms. Dombeck said she would correct it.

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 28, 2008 meeting as amended.**

Mr. Spape moved for approval; Mr. Fetzer seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0, on a voice vote.

Mrs. Courtad arrived at this point.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**SEWARD-GILES CEMETERY CLOSE OUT**

Mr. Lowe said that a punch list was mailed to Landscape by Design. There are nine items on the list and all are fairly minor. The letter went out November 3, and since then the weather has not been good. The snow has covered up everything that had to be done. Mr. Lowe said that some of the items can be done in a day and a half, but with this weather it would probably have to wait until the spring. He added that the benches, signs, fence and flagpole are all completed. Mr. Lowe reiterated that he and Mr. Brankatelli feel that everything can be done by early spring. The contractor will probably have to spend half a day to finish cleaning it up. He again stated that clean-up will be put aside until early next spring.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**DIANE WILBUR, 196 SOUTH CHILLICOTHE - "SECRET GARDEN" HANGING WALL SIGN**

Mr. Lowe stated that it is a change in a sign for one that the commission approved a few months ago. It is located on the bracket at the front of the building, and is in fact displayed now. He said that it was reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review on November 13, who requested that scalloped corners be done on the top and bottom sections of the three below the "Secret Garden" sign.

Diane Wilbur introduced herself as the applicant. Mr. Lowe asked if the scallops have been added to the lower sections of the sign, and Ms. Wilbur replied that they have not been done to those sections yet. She explained that it was submitted to the Architectural Board of Review showing rectangular sections with squared off corners. The Architectural Board wanted the top and bottom sections with scalloped corners. Ms. Wilbur told the members that Sue Sutton told her she preferred the original submittal. She said that Mrs. Sutton told her to bring it to the commission so it can be discussed. Ms. Wilbur noted that she preferred the original design, and hoped that it can be approved rather than the scalloped design.

Mr. Lowe wondered if the sign is just for December, and Ms. Wilbur responded that, with the economy, it is a holiday venture to help her get through the tough economic time. She said she would like to approach it as they will remain there because she does not want to go through it all over again in January, especially if business is okay.

Mr. Kudley said that, from the city's standpoint as far as the process, the sign should not have gone up since it did not have a permit. Ms. Wilbur acknowledged that, but said she had a grand opening and needed to have the sign up.

Mr. Kudley mentioned that she put herself in the position where she could be fined by the city. Ms. Wilbur remarked that she would hope that it wouldn't happen. Mr. Lowe asked if she owned the building, and Ms. Wilbur replied that she owned it for 18 years.

Per an inquiry by Mr. Kudley, Ms. Wilbur said that it is the only sign going on the building. She said that, at this point, she may return in January if the business is a success. She added that, financially, it won't be easy with the vacant space.

Mr. Kudley asked Mr. Lowe if he remembered the approval of the sign for Paper Expressions and whether the hanging sign was allowed with just the one placard. He noted that this proposed sign has an additional three signs hanging under it. Mr. Lowe said that they already have the attachment to the building hanging, and noted that this is the sign that is most visible from the road. He added that he did not have much of a problem with a sign being put on the structure. A sign was approved on the north face of the building, which was for the previous business. Mr. Lowe stated that since the previous business no longer exists, he thought that the commission should discuss whether that sign would be null and void.

Mr. Lowe suggested concentrating on this particular sign for now. He did not have a problem with the proposed sign but recommended explaining to the owner that they need to submit an application as soon as possible when they have a new tenant.

Mr. Spape explained that the Architectural Board of Review looked at the sign and discussed the three extra panels in detail. They were a little larger, and Ms. Wilbur did make some concessions to make them smaller. He noted that he saw the sign this evening and thought it looked nice. However, he said the scalloped corners were what the ABR approved. Mr. Spape did not know if the ABR would approve it without the scalloped corners. There was some discussion on the procedures and meetings that would have to give another approval if the sign is done with square corners, as originally submitted. Mr. Spape gave a little background on some of the discussion during the ABR review.

Ms. Wilbur reiterated about Mrs. Sutton's preference. A conversation began about whether or not the ABR would be willing to approve the sign without the scallops, which would mean that she would have to return to the Landmark Commission again. Ms. Wilbur offered to do the scalloped panels if necessary.

Mr. Kudley asked the others their preference. Mr. Spape said he preferred the scalloped panels, but the other members preferred the square panels. During further discussion on the procedure for approvals, it was decided by both the members and the applicant that the best way to have the sign quickly would be to have the scalloped corners as requested by the ABR.

**MOTION: To approve the sign as approved by the Architectural Board of Review.**

Mr. Spape moved for approval; Mr. Fetzer seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Spape, Mr. Fetzer, Mrs. Courtad, Mr. Kudley  
Nays: None

Mr. Kudley told Ms. Wilbur that it was approved and the scallops need to be cut on the sign.

Mr. Lowe informed Ms. Wilbur that the sign that was previously approved for the north side of the building was approved for Paper Expressions. He then told her that the sign could not be used for any other business, and she acknowledged it.

JONATHAN FIELDS, 220 SOUTH CHILLICOTHE - "AURORA RUG OUTLET" GROUND SIGN

Jonathan Fields, owner of the Aurora Rug Outlet, said they changed the name of the business from "Rugtime" to "Aurora Rug Outlet". He said they wanted to keep the sign as is except for the new name. The letters would be the same colors as the original sign. The sign has a white background, with black letters, and the accent color is to be the same gold as used on the building. Per an inquiry by Mr. Lowe, Mr. Fields stated that the web address now on the sign would be removed, and the sign would appear as the picture submitted in the packet.

Mr. Lowe noted that it is basically the same structure with different lettering. He asked Mr. Fields why he was changing the name of the business, and Mr. Fields replied that the business is really struggling in that location. He explained that many customers have been questioned and they said that they think it is a very upscale store like in Chagrin Falls. However, that type of store does not work in Aurora. He said that they are not even close to covering just the expenses and are losing about \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month, for the last four months. Mr. Fields added that the store won't survive if nothing is done to try to adapt.

**MOTION: To adopt.**

Mrs. Courtad moved for approval; Mr. Spape seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mrs. Courtad, Mr. Spape, Mr. Fetzer, Mr. Kudley  
Nays: None

RICK SANDSTROM, 204 SOUTH CHILLICOTHE - "CHRISTOPHER'S BISTRO" GROUND SIGN

Mr. Lowe explained that the Morning Glory sign is going to be removed and replaced with the proposed submittal. The location will be closer to the parking lot and is being installed to emphasize Christopher's. Mr. Sandstrom stated that the old sign had three or four businesses listed on it. The little pickets on the bottom are hard to read, especially when driving by. They plan to highlight the two businesses on the property, Christopher's and Ohio Title.

Mr. Lowe asked if the arbor would remain, and Mr. Sandstrom replied that it would stay. There is a sign on it now, but the zoning department is sure that it would have to be removed. He said that Christopher's was willing to remove that sign to try to have a sign that would stand out more at the street.

Mr. Lowe questioned whether the sign with the hours of business would stay. Mr. Sandstrom answered that he believed the sign could remain because the total square feet of signage is under the maximum allowed. He said that the sign is listed in the code but could not remember how it is categorized. The members reviewed the submittal.

Mr. Sandstrom gave some background on the Morning Glory sign. Per a question by Mr. Kudley, Mr. Sandstrom explained that the hours of operation are to be listed on the small sign on the building. He said that the whole idea is to clean it up, but still have the business noticed, and felt that it would be a big improvement to the site.

Mr. Lowe felt that the sign is in keeping with the signs for neighboring properties.

Mr. Sandstrom mentioned that the owner has been wheeling out a sandwich board type sign to try to help attract business, but they have been informed by the zoning inspector that they might not be able to have the sign. He said they are still looking into it.

**MOTION: To approve the new sign.**

Mrs. Courtad moved for approval; Mr. Fetzer seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a roll

call vote.

Yeas: Mrs. Courtad, Mr. Fetzer, Mr. Spape, Mr. Kudley  
Nays: None

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mr. Kudley mentioned that he has letters recognizing the items that the city gave to the Historical Society and will forward them to the Secretary for the files.

Mrs. Courtad asked about the next meeting. Mr. Kudley said it is scheduled on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month. However, he felt that giving people an opportunity to submit something up to and including December 12 would be enough time. If nothing is received by that date, the members agreed to have the December meeting canceled.

**MOTION: If no business is submitted by December 12, there will be no meeting for December.**

Mr. Fetzer moved for approval; Mrs. Courtad seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a voice vote.

Mr. Lowe raised the subject of the tailor's sign on the red building that Mr. Sandstrom owns. Due to a question on the sign's status, Ms. Dombeck explained that the sign was on the agenda in June because Mr. Lowe mentioned it the meeting before and stated that the owner was going to submit a plan. The owner never submitted a plan for the sign and the item was removed from the following agenda. Mr. Lowe said that he told Mr. Sandstrom several times to have a plan submitted, but it has never been done. He told the members that the zoning inspector would probably make a visit to the site regarding that sign, but since it has not been submitted to the Landmark Commission, there is really not much that can be done by the commission.

Mrs. Courtad noted that they should be fined for a sign without approvals. Mr. Kudley suggested passing a motion to encourage the building department to cite them. After a brief conversation, the members decided to make a motion to ask the inspector to reinspect the sign and formally inform the owner that the sign is illegal.

Mrs. Courtad wondered why anyone would bother to come before the commission if nothing is done when an illegal sign is installed. Mr. Kudley asked that a request for a reply from the inspector regarding the action that will be taken be added to the motion.

**MOTION: To ask the zoning inspector to reinspect the sign for the tailoring business and formally inform the owner that the sign is illegal, and to reply to the Landmark Commission regarding the action that is taken.**

Mr. Kudley moved for approval; Mrs. Courtad seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a voice vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mrs. Courtad moved to adjourn at 7:38 p.m.; Mr. Kudley seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0, on a voice vote.

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John Kudley - Chairman

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Susan Dombeck - Secretary  
AUDIO TAPE ON FILE