

Historic and/or Architectural Advisory Board
City of Cortland
April 23, 2012

A Special meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on April 23, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room at City Hall.

Present: Chair Kline, Comm. Abbott, Dineen, Delaney, Kane and Wineburg

Staff Present: Cheryl Massmann, Deputy City Clerk

Item No. 1 - Minutes - April 16, 2012.

Motion: Comm. Dineen
Seconded: Comm. Wineburg

Motion passed.

Chair Kline distributed some reference pages for placement in each Commissioner's Historic Board information books.

Item No. 2 - 51 - 55 Main St. - (Pothos)(CB) - Building Renovations

Chair Kline explained that this was a special meeting for Emmanuel Pothos. He and Atty. Francis Casullo are representing this property. Chair Kline explained that this was once the old Rose Co. and due to the fire it now stands in poor condition. She noted that Mr. Pothos is planning to improve the condition of this building. She explained that all the broken windows will be replaced with quarter (1/4) inch clear glass, but the window profiles will remain the same. Mr. Pothos stated that was correct.

Chair Kline further explained that the plan is to grind down the window frames to remove the chipped paint and they'll be primed and painted black. She noted that the front door of the old Jones will remain the same and the glass will be replaced and the transom above will remain and that will be done with a clear glass. Mr. Pothos stated that was correct.

Chair Kline explained that the "Shangri La" signage will be removed. She noted that the front windows will remain with the same profile and glass panels as they are now. The work will be done by Steve Douglas of the Glass Doctor, who will replace some of the window frames that need replacing, will do it with the same aluminum frame as originally done. Those window frames are on the Court Street side of the building.

Chair Kline next presented the block glass windows in the rear of the building. She explained that broken blocks would be replaced with the same glass blocks and any

detailing will remain the same and nothing will be altered except for cleaning and painting. She explained that the awning situation is not being addressed at this time. She noted that it may remain rolled up, but it will be checked for condition and possible removal. She explained that when the exterior is done, the inside of the building, which is gutted, should not be visible to passersby. Chair Kline noted that after discussing this with Mr. Pothos, it was thought that he would want to put up some black paper to block the interior view, but Mr. Pothos would like to put up some signage advertising "space for rent". Mr. Pothos stated that was correct.

Chair Kline noted that in order to do that, there would be times that Mr. Pothos will need to gain access to the window and Mr. Pothos is proposing black paperlike material be approved to cover the windows. Black was his proposed choice and he brought a sample of the color. Mr. Pothos explained that he would not be using brown paper such as that being used by the business next door, but something similar in thickness and texture, only in black. He explained that he wanted to cover the window glass with one (1) single piece of this material rather than cut pieces being put together in the window.

Chair Kline explained that she has checked on some materials since Mr. Pothos came and spoke with her. She found that there are pull shades that come in black that can be purchased rather than peeling a big sheet of something which has been adhered to the window. Chair Kline again reminded Mr. Pothos of the twenty-five (25) percent limitation on window space signage. Mr. Pothos and Mr. Casullo stated that they understood and indicated that they've reached out to the Code Office.

Chair Kline noted that the cedar shake awning on Main Street is not being dealt with at this time. She explained that the prior owner had felt strongly that behind that awning was the original glass transom. She asked Mr. Pothos to investigate this. She noted that this project involves a great deal of money, so it is being done in phases. Comm. Wineburg asked what the timeframe was.

Atty. Casullo stated that he was representing the Pothos family. He stated that he became involved when the family contacted him when it appeared that the IDA/BDC was considering taking back the property through eminent domain. He explained that at that point he believed that was around the end of January and he spoke with Mr. VanGorder at that time and asked what they could do to have the IDA/BDC not move forward with the eminent domain. Mr. VanGorder stated that the owner had to show some action instead of words and that they needed to get the property cleaned up. He noted that was fair enough and has been working with Emmanuel and his family to start that process.

Atty. Casullo explained that this will be done in phases and that the first phase will be that all the windows that need attention are going to get the attention. He explained that one thing that wasn't mentioned by Chair Kline was that there was going to be pointing of the masonry done all over the building. He explained that there were a couple of other things such as painting and general clean up and at the end of this particular phase, the

owner will be power washing the entire building. Mr. Pothos agreed and noted that after speaking with Chair Kline, she brought up a point that with pressure washing, it would have to be done very carefully so as not to expose the brick too much. He explained that it will be tested in certain spots. Atty. Casullo explained that they would get someone who was competent in doing pressure washing to do the building. Mr. Pothos explained that if they found it was going to chip all the brick, they wouldn't continue. Atty. Casullo stated that they would figure something done. Comm. Wineburg stated that her building couldn't be power washed for that very reason. Mr. Pothos suggested an acid cleaning. Chair Kline told him no acid until he investigates that as there is the possibility for great damage to be done to the brick.

Mr. Pothos presented a fresh sample of mortar for pointing. Chair Kline noted that the sample being presented was very fresh and she would like to see a sample that is cured so that it could be determined if it blends with the existing mortar because when pointing not every area is done and it will show. She noted that he had some time as he wouldn't be pointing the brick up immediately and she would like to see the mortar when it's cured. Atty. Casullo stated that he would like to have this phase done by June 1. He noted that the project would've been started, but found out they had to come before this Board for approval. He noted that they hoped to begin as soon as possible and have this phase of the project done by June 1 then with that being done, he felt that this would satisfy his promise to Mr. VanGorder, that this will look far more aesthetically pleasing than it has and then they would go to work on their secondary phase. He stated that the building is structurally sound and they would then address some other clean-ups and the awning and work to get a business into that location. He explained that they would also be talking with Zoning Officer Weber or Asst. Chief Knickerbocker to make sure that the three (3) windows that are going to be framed are okay with them and there is no issue with them. He noted that he had been in touch with them and that he is staying in touch with Mr. VanGorder of the IDA/BDC. He noted that the goal is to coordinate and to try to get this work done by June 1, 2012.

Mr. Pothos thanked all those who came out today, especially with the bad weather. He stated that he and his family are serious about cleaning up this building. He noted that currently the building is an eyesore, but with the commitment of everyone involved, he will see this project through.

Mr. Pothos proceeded to go over his proposal. He explained that all the windows will look the same and the rust will be ground off the metal frames and primed and finished with black paint. This will be done on every single window facing Main Street and Court Street. He explained that in addition, the window glass that was broken in the firefighting effort did not affect the metal window frames. He noted that the metal frames were in good working condition even though the glass was broken. He explained that the broken glass would be removed and a new pane of glass would be installed on the top and bottom and the plywood covering those windows would then be removed resulting in a better looking condition. He explained that there was some vandalism and he will do his best to clean it

up and in addition that area would also be included in this project and the door frame will be painted black. He explained that the current signage will come down and all of the façade trim will be painted black to bring out the beauty of the building. He explained that the masonry is a daunting task and needs to be discussed, but as Atty. Casullo said, the initial step is to beautify the building. He noted that it was time to remove the plywood and to replace the glass in all the windows that needed it.

Mr. Pothos also explained that on the B. T. Jones building at 55 Main Street and next door, to have the original intact aged copper window frames. He stated that he is working with Mr. Douglas, of the Glass Smith. He noted that it wasn't the most energy efficient, but for aesthetic appearance and restoration, he was excited to bring that back.

Chair Kline asked him about the wooden awning on the 51-53 Main Street location. Mr. Pothos explained that he planned to paint it black to better blend with the building. He further noted that he proposing to cover the windows and they could even use green if they wanted him to promote the return of the NY Jets. He will be flexible and he has spoken with Adam Megivern of the Downtown Partnership and will reach out to the Mayor, to offer his windows to do displays for community events or non-profit events. Chair Kline again reminded him of the twenty-five (25) percent limitation on window signage coverage. Mr. Pothos explained that he wanted the windows covered to keep people from loitering and he noted that the interior is down to the studs and it is structurally sound and that has been noted by a professional inspection. He noted that a lot of time, money and effort has already been spent on the interior, but that can't be seen from the outside. Chair Kline noted that with regards to his offering signage space in the windows, she reminded him that was something that had to be addressed to the Code Office because they were considered temporary signs. Mr. Pothos agreed that City approvals were necessary for all signage; he is just offering the window space.

Comm. Wineburg asked if the new windows would be covered up on the inside. Chair Kline noted that was correct so that the building would look nice and clean and eliminate the view of the inside. Mr. Pothos stated that he plant to put up a "For Lease" sign in both buildings. Comm. Wineburg asked if he planned to clean up the inside. Mr. Pothos stated that the building already was cleaned, just not broom swept. He noted that there were a few piles of debris in the back of 55 Main Street because they had tried to remove a safe. Chair Kline noted that the building is ready for someone who is interested and new walls and framing won't be done until a new tenant is found and then they will have things made to order. Chair Kline noted that at this time, the windows should be covered on the ground floor. Mr. Pothos agreed, noting that people tend to loiter and he felt that by covering the windows, there would be nothing of interest for them. He will cover the windows with any color the Board chooses. He noted that any surface of the building that is black will be scraped, primed and painted.

Chair Kline stated that when it comes to the pointing of the brick, Mr. Pothos may want to create a test area in the back of the building and make any adjustment to the mortar color

as needed. Mr. Pothos noted that there was an area on Court Street, where it appeared that the bricks were a little thicker. Chair Kline wondered if that was a joining of two (2) separate buildings. Comm. Kane didn't know, but honestly didn't think so. She asked if the heating system for the two (2) buildings was still intertwined in the basement. Mr. Pothos noted that at the time of the fire, the Jones building heating system had been separated from 51-53 Main Street. He further noted that now the building had been united into one (1) building as it originally had been built and would remain that way noting that it was hard to develop a single building that has two (2) different owners. Comm. Kane noted that before 1900 it had been one (1) building occupied by a bank and a drug store with offices upstairs. Mr. Pothos explained that the pointing is a big project and he's committed to making the building look as beautiful as possible right from the get go. He noted that when everything outlined in his application to the Board is completed it will look nice. He stressed that he wanted everything done correctly keeping in mind historic and period restoration and they were working with architect, Jeff Taw. (the Board is very familiar with him) He explained that Mr. Taw was provided by Thoma Development, which he was very grateful for.

Chair Kline asked Gary VanGorder of the IDA/BDC if Mr. Pothos was in any danger of eminent domain if the pointing of the building was not completed by June 1 due to weather or whatever. She asked if everything had to be done one hundred (100) percent complete by June 1. Mr. VanGorder stated that they needed to see a good faith effort, but he understood that the environment had a lot to say about this kind of a project. He's confident that Emmanuel is going to do what he's talked to you about, but if it went to September 1, then we'd have to talk with him again, but he didn't see that happening.

Mr. Pothos noted that this was a huge undertaking. He explained that talking with people in the masonry business, the pointing project was in a one (1) to two (2) month time frame even if he started tomorrow, it was painstakingly slow and shouldn't be rushed. Chair Kline noted that was true. Atty. Casullo asked Mr. VanGorder that if the windows were up, the building was painted and at June 15 the point work has been started, would he be calling saying that they were proceeding with the eminent domain. Mr. VanGorder noted that he wanted to see good faith effort. Chair Kline noted that painting, replacing windows and getting the awning done would transform the building and she noted that pointing did take time. Mr. Pothos stated that they wanted to get the pointing done right, so they didn't want to rush it to meet a deadline and have the output look sloppy.

Comm. Delaney asked if there was new brick on the 51-53 Main Street building where Smooch was. Mr. Pothos stated that it was new and that the columns on either side had been painted, but he also noted that after you looked at the building you also could pick out other things. He noted that Architect Taw had pointed out to him that on the 55 Main Street building, that a non-period restoration had been done even though it looked good and is not the classical look. Comm. Kane noted that the floor of the left hand side building had been lowered. Mr. Pothos noted that when walking into 55 Main Street, there

is a three (3) foot drop compared to 51-53 Main Street. Comm. Kane noted that was done way back on the Rose Company.

Chair Kline stated that the Board should discuss the window covering. Mr. Pothos noted that when the window work has been completed, he'd like to have them covered and he has proposed black as he felt standard white would be too bright and too loud. He noted that he was open to suggestions because the color was irrelevant to him. He noted that he could do a green if it was temporary while the Jets were in town. Atty. Casullo felt that he should keep it black. Comm. Delaney stated that black is better and noted that Mr. Pothos could get big rolls of black paper forty-eight (48) or forty-five (45) inches wide. Mr. Pothos noted the windows were very wide.

Chair Kline asked how Mr. Pothos plans to adhere the paper to the inside of the windows. Mr. Pothos noted that he could paint the interior of the windows and then later just scrape it off with a razor to remove it. He is working with Meldrim's to see if there is any paint they would recommend as he didn't want to ruin the windows. Chair Kline noted that she had painted windows at the gas station down on River Street. She also reminded him that they did sell shades on a roller that would allow him to adhere a temporary sign. Chair Kline noted that they didn't want to have the paper buckled, but that it should be flush with the glass and be nice and smooth looking. Comm. Wineburg noted that temperatures could also affect how the paper covering might look. Atty. Casullo noted that the chosen material might also be faded by the sun over time. Mr. Pothos noted that it was very important for him that this didn't look like an eyesore. He liked the black and he liked the paper idea. Chair Kline did note that paper would fade and she thought he should investigate this a little bit more and find something that will be flush to the windows and that won't peel, fade, buckle, etc. Chair Kline noted that he would want something that would last because he didn't know how long it would be before he got a tenant. She had also checked with Lowe's and they do have the shades. Mr. Pothos noted that he was trying to support local businesses if possible and he would check with Builder's Best. Mr. Pothos asked if the Board had any objections to covering the windows in a neutral black. Chair Kline asked the Board if they were in agreement with the color black. The Board agreed that black was fine. Chair Kline asked about the material. Mr. VanGorder suggested he look into a static cling product. Chair Kline noted that there was such a product made and she's used it on some windows in the past, but not ones of this size. She noted that he could check into that product for that size glass. Comm. Wineburg noted that it was better than paint. Chair Kline asked Mr. Pothos to check with the Glass Doctor for suggestions on temporary window covering that didn't fade, buckle, etc. Comm. Kane noted that she hoped that as people noticed what was going on with the building, that he would soon have a prospective tenant. Mr. Pothos noted that it was a strategic location to develop. He wanted to find an appropriate business with some longevity; a good anchor tenant and not another bar. The Board agreed with that statement. Chair Kline asked him to remember as the owner that in the future, nothing happens without the Historic Board's approval. Mr. Pothos stated that he would be a good

landlord and inform his tenant that they were in the Historic District and need to get approval before they did anything.

Chair Kline asked with regards to the window coverings she would like to go over this, so it was very clear. She stated that we are going with the color black and Mr. Pothos will speak with Mr. Douglas of the Glass Smith with regards to the material for the window curtains that will not fade or buckle and looking good and this will be installed on the entire first floor level windows.

Comm. Delaney asked if the Board felt that the written proposal was accurate, if the Board made a motion to accept this proposal as written. Chair Kline stated that it seems to be, but she would like to have it in the minutes as to what is proposed so nothing is overlooked so the Board wouldn't have to pay for that later. Comm. Delaney asked if the pointing was in the proposal. Mr. Pothos noted that the pointing was in the proposal, but he was willing to split it out and come back before this Board because there were so many variables to it. He noted that the proposal could be just the façade with that being the painting, the scraping, the installation of the windows, etc., and give their approval for that, he would not have a problem with that.

Chair Kline asked the Board if they would have a problem with Mr. Pothos doing a large sample section of pointing in the back of the building so that we can visually see the actual grout and how it compares to the rest of the building. Mr. Pothos thought that was a great idea. Chair Kline noted that you couldn't see something like that with a sample that isn't cured yet. She noted that he couldn't get an exact match, but he could get pretty close. She asked what the Board thought of that, rather than having him come back. Mr. Pothos pointed to a large brick wall section now covered by vines in between the two (2) glass brick windows.

There was much discussion regarding if the motion should be item by item or if they were willing to accept the project proposal as presented. Atty. Casullo noted that everything that was put in their proposal today, they would stay in close contact with this Board and if something is missing, they wouldn't do anything without this Board knowing about it and he would also keep Mr. VanGorder and the City posted and he would contact Chair Kline at every stage of the work so she could see what they were doing. Mr. Pothos noted that his only concern was the window covering and doing whatever the Board would like. He didn't want to have another special meeting and would like to submit the material sample at a regularly scheduled meeting. Chair Kline stated that the Board was most concerned with the window covering and the mortar. Comm. Delaney stated that she was more concerned about writing up a motion that is missing a lot of detail. She felt that the proposal was very detailed and she would like to see a motion that stated that this proposal has been accepted as presented with the specification that the color for the window covering be black and investigated with Mr. Douglas and that the mortar sample be tested first.

Atty. Casullo stated that his client would come to this Board with the material and color of the window covering and Mr. Pothos would do the test section for the mortar as discussed and the Board can see it and then it can be discussed after that. Everyone thought that was fair. Atty. Casullo stated that everyone could come over and take a look at the mortar and see what it looks like. He further stated that they would pick the window covering materials out and present it and it will be black. Again, everyone thought that was fair. Chair Kline noted that it was three (3) windows that needed new frames. Mr. Pothos stated that his only question was, did he have to come to a meeting for the window covering or just present it to the Chair.

Chair Kline noted that she had given him a schedule of meetings and submission dates and he would have to submit the sample/proposal. Atty. Casullo noted that their biggest goal was to have the windows, painting and clean up done by summer and the mortar started, so that by the end of June all of the windows are done and they are making the progress. Mr. Pothos also noted that the logistics of doing the mortar work also had to be thought out as they had to work around pedestrians. Atty. Casullo noted that he wanted to get the aesthetics started soon.

A motion was made to approve the project as presented with the mortar sample to be tested in the rear of building between the glass block windows first and that the window covering material to be brought before this Board for approval.

By: Comm. Wineburg
Seconded: Comm. Abbott

Motion passed.

Mr. Pothos thanked all of the Board members for granting him this special meeting and giving up of their personal time. Chair Kline asked Mr. Pothos to sign the Historic District Decision Form.

Comm. Kane noted that the graphics on the building windows were put there under the direction of Mr. Purdy of the Downtown Partnership and the Arts Council and she didn't feel that Mr. Pothos should be blamed for those.

New Business

Chair Kline reported that she had received a phone call from Erin of Snow Mountain and that they are coming before this Board next month. They had received a violation notice. She noted that they had a framing in the window that was twelve (12) inches back and for him that is allowed. She reminded everyone that when neon is coming before this Board, they can be allowed, but the Board could reduce the size allowed. Comm. Wineburg asked

