

Historic and/or Architectural Advisory Board
City of Cortland
December 12, 2011

A regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on December 12, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room at City Hall.

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

Staff Present: Zoning Officer Bruce Weber and Cheryl Massmann, Deputy City Clerk

Item No. 5 - Minutes - November 14, 2011

Motion: Comm. Wineburg

Seconded: Comm. Dineen

Motion passed.

Item No. 1 - 41 Main St. - (Karam)(CB) - Awning

Mr. Charbel Karam was present. Chair Kline reviewed the motion that was made at the last meeting. She explained that Mr. Karam has not come back with an alternative proposal. He is willing to make color changes to the facade to more match the red awning. Chair Kline explained that she has spoken with SHIPO and they suggested that they either remain with their motion or Mr. Karam could repaint the facade. SHIPO advised that the Historic Board needed to make their motion very clean and strong and to give a reason for their decision.

Chair Kline gave the details of the new proposal. She noted that there would now be no name on the building facade. It would just be plain. Mr. Karam then submitted some proposed artwork that could be painted in place of lettering, so the facade wouldn't be so plain or empty.

Mr. Karam stated that he felt that his new awning was bringing in more customers allowing him to keep his employees. He needs the awning very badly and he is trying to work with the Historic Board.

Chair Kline wants to work with him, but this is a historic district and she wants to keep things in harmony. She explained that this was very difficult, noting that this is a volunteer board charged with keeping things right and that is why she has been working with him. She noted that he can keep his temporary proposal for one (1) or maybe (2) years until he can afford to change it and at that time he would have to come back to this Board. She stated that there would be no writing or graphics on the facade and she

showed color chips and a drawing that showed mostly tan with two (2) shades of blue to highlighting the trim.

Zoning Officer Weber noted that a variance may be needed anyway, because the signage on the front and sides of the awning might still exceed what was allowable.

Comm. Dineen noted that they could vote to allow this proposal for one (1) year or so and then ask Mr. Karam to come back with a new proposal. Mr. Karam noted that if his business failed, he'd remove the awning. He also questioned whether he could hire a painting contractor who would be willing to do the façade painting now. Chair Kline noted that if he hired someone quickly, it could be done as temperatures were still in the right range.

Chair Kline noted that the Board would have to decide if they wanted to go with the façade change or not. Comm. Wineburg would like to have the façade change done now and not wait until April. Mr. Karam stated that he wanted to do quality work. Mr. Karam noted that red was a very old color and favored in his country.

Chair Kline noted that this is just a band aid fix to allow Mr. Karam to keep the red awning. She felt the Commission was willing to work with him by giving this band aid.

Comm. Delaney asked if the old awning was in his possession and what kind of shape was it in. Mr. Karam stated that it had gone to the garbage and was gone.

Comm. Kane noted that if this Board was going to make a new motion on this application, that they should repeal last month's motion and then make a new motion. She also stated that she didn't feel that changing the façade colors would help with the awning color.

Comm. Abbott stated that she didn't see the point off painting the façade now. Comm. Abbott was of the opinion that the awning should be taken down. Comm. Dineen noted that the proposal was to remove the façade signage above the awning and to allow the red awning to remain for a year.

Zoning Officer Weber asked how long the façade signage had been in place. Chair Kline stated that it had been there since 2006. Comm. Delaney noted that she didn't agree that the awning had increased his business. Zoning Officer Weber noted that he would still have to apply for a variance for the awning signage as he thought it was still more than allowable.

Comm. Kane stated that the Commission had spent a lot of time on this; more than some much larger proposed projects. She called for a decision to be made. Chair Kline stated that if he did not agree with the decision, he could always appeal, noting that's why there was an appeal process in place. Mr. Karam stated that he wants to work with the Historic Board and asked if they would give him until the spring and then he'd change the awning.

