

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE MAYWOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMITTEE

MEETING #4

**Wednesday, June 20, 2018
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Lobby Rooms Cherry and Dogwood**

MAYWOOD MEMBERS: Dean Arkema
Amanda Davis, MCA President
Sean Handerhan
Kris McMenamin
Tova Solo
Bruce Wiljanen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alex Berger
Bart Collart
Lorne Epstein
Heidi Fitzharris
Chris Friedli
Ken Friedli
Maria Greene
Eleanor Harvey
Heather Hanson
Frieda Kulish
Kris McLaughlin
Andy McLeod
Rae Mueller
Carol Rickard-Brideau

HALRB MEMBERS: Sarah Garner
Joan Lawrence, Chairman
Richard Woodruff, Vice Chairman
Andrew Wenchel

STAFF: Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Historic Preservation Coordinator
John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Planner
Kyle Fisher, Historic Preservation Management Intern

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lawrence, Chairman of the Maywood Design Guidelines Committee (MGC), called the meeting to order.

REVIEW OF DRAFT CHANGES TO MAYWOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

Mr. Liebertz reviewed the agenda for the meeting. He then summarized the changes made since the previous MGC meeting discussion on April 4, 2018. He began with the section “Sheds” (page 5-45). He explained that staff looked for ways to allow for preconstructed sheds, but most of these have vinyl or aluminum-clad windows. The options, therefore, were limited under the current guidelines. Staff proposes to allow sheds with painted or stained wood, all-wood plywood siding, oriented strand board (OSB) siding, hardboard faced siding, or cementitious fiberboard siding. Wood, steel, or fiberglass doors, and wood, aluminum-clad wood, or vinyl windows would be allowed.

Ms. Davis said she had received an email from a homeowner inquiring whether flowerboxes for sheds would be considered under the ACoA process. Mr. Liebertz said he had to review the Zoning Ordinance, but recalled that the Ordinance did not allow staff or the HALRB to examine such elements.

Regarding the examples on page 5-46 of wood-frame sheds with OSB siding, Mr. Wiljanen asked if the OSB could be specified as textured or smooth. Mr. Liebertz replied that staff left that unspecified to allow more options for sheds. Mr. Wiljanen stated smooth unfinished OSB material would not be appropriate for sheds. Mr. Liebertz said that OSB siding material would need to be finished (painted or stained), but staff did not want to specify texture.

Mr. Wiljanen asked if painted plywood siding therefore would be allowed. Mr. Liebertz responded that all-wood plywood siding is specified as an appropriate material for sheds. He asked if Mr. Wiljanen had reservations. Mr. Wiljanen responded he did not find it an appropriate material. He said he preferred staff add the word “textured” to describe the kind of OSB allowed on sheds. Mr. Wenchel agreed. He said there are ways of texturing OSB that would be more suitable for Maywood. Mr. Liebertz said that LP SmartSide is a brand of OSB material that offers a textured surface. He said he was hesitant to specify brands for building materials. Mr. Wiljanen repeated that adding the word “textured” to describe the permissible OSB materials would help. Mr. Liebertz said that there are some OSB materials, such as LP SmartSide that are not textured that could still look appropriate for Maywood. Mr. Liebertz agreed to revisions to ensure the guidelines would not allow unfinished-looking sheds. Ms. Lawrence suggested the words “horizontally or vertically textured,” which would allow for lap OSB.

Ms. Solo asked if the guidelines should specify if vertical siding was also allowed for any building in Maywood. To her recollection, the HALRB only approved horizontal siding. Mr. Liebertz responded the HALRB allowed vertical siding in the recent past on an addition.

Ms. Liccese-Torres asked if the committee was particularly concerned that vertical siding be allowed on sheds. Mr. Wenchel suggested that the siding pattern on a given shed should match that of the house.

[6:12 PM: Kris McMenamin arrived].

Mr. Wiljanen asked a question about the dimensions labeled on some of the diagrams throughout the draft. On page 5-30, for example, the specifications for concrete retaining walls do not match the specifications in the text. Mr. Liebertz noted he would correct the diagrams to match the text.

Mr. Liebertz next reviewed changes made to the section “Garages.” Regarding dimensions, an ACoA would allow a 13’-wide, 22’-long, and 14.5’-tall garage. Materials would basically be the same as currently permitted. Gable and hipped roofs would be required to match the pitch of the house. Mr. Liebertz reminded the committee that staff cannot grant a setback modification; only the HALRB can direct the Zoning Administrator to do so.

Ms. Davis asked if property owners without a garage could now use the ACoA process to build one. Mr. Liebertz replied that requests for single-car garages that meet the above requirements could go through the ACoA process. The property owner would still be required to obtain all required county permits.

Mr. Liebertz next introduced discussion of the new sections of the draft guidelines pertaining to the Exterior Renovations category. He began with “Solar Panels” (page 5-56).

Ms. Davis asked if solar panels could be placed on the front elevation of a new garage.

Mr. Liebertz said that he would likely revise the guidelines to restrict solar panel placement on the front elevation of accessory buildings to buildings located on the rear of the property. Requests for solar panels on the front elevation of an accessory building would likely go to the HALRB. Solar panels not visible from the primary street can go through the ACoA process.

Mr. Woodruff asked whether solar panels on a corner lot would be able to go through the ACoA process. Mr. Liebertz said yes, if they were in an area of low visibility from the street.

Ms. Davis said that many property owners in Maywood are interested in adding solar panels to their properties. Mr. Liebertz responded that since solar technology changes quickly, this section of the guidelines would likely be revised in the future.

Mr. Wiljanen questioned the idea of allowing free-standing solar panels due to their large size. Mr. Liebertz responded that staff would strive to minimize any impact to historic buildings or structures. The Historic Preservation Program wants to encourage the use of green technologies that are compatible with historic preservation.

Ms. Liccese-Torres added that staff would consider each request on its own merits.

Mr. Wiljanen replied that, based on discussion of other sections of the draft, staff seemed to be considering the impact of other changes to the historic resources of Maywood more than that of solar technology. Mr. Handerhan said he believed solar panels were unlike other architectural or landscape features that they should be considered differently than sheds or garages. Ms. Solo said the guidelines seem to suggest that owners of corner lots, such as she, could place solar panels on their properties beside the sidewalk, which would be visually obtrusive. Mr. Liebertz said that the 25-foot setback requirement for corner lots would apply.

Mr. Wiljanen suggested that solar arrays have a size restriction.

Ms. Lawrence said that the amount of power the property owner desires from a solar array might help determine its size.

[6:39 PM: Dean Arkema arrived].

Ms. Liccese-Torres asked the committee if they would like staff to develop some size requirements for solar arrays. The members agreed. Mr. Liebertz said staff would speak with colleagues in the Department of Environmental Services.

Regarding the draft guidelines in general, Ms. Solo recommended that specific language be used to avoid confusion. She pointed to the term “limited visibility” under Option 2 on page 5-58 as an example. She also asked staff to clarify how a solar panel should “minimize the points of attachment to the building” (page 5-58).

Mr. Liebertz explained that it is staff’s desire for the installation of solar panel equipment to result in the least amount of damage to a building as possible.

Ms. Solo said staff should specify how many points of attachment would be allowed. Ms. Liccese-Torres replied that this could restrict the type of equipment that could be installed since each might be different. Ms. Solo said staff should define “points of attachment.”

Mr. Liebertz agreed to reconsider solar arrays or provide limitations on heights.

Ms. McMenamain asked why requests for solar panels on historic parts of buildings would not be considered. Mr. Liebertz replied that such requests may be considered under the CoA process.

Ms. McMenamain asked why the HALRB and not staff would consider it. Mr. Liebertz responded that it may impact character-defining features of the historic dwelling or streetscape.

Ms. McMenamain asked if staff and the HALRB also are concerned with non-historic structures or materials. Mr. Liebertz replied that staff and the board are concerned about architectural compatibility and the effects on the character of the district.

Ms. Liccese-Torres added that review of solar panel installations under the CoA process is not to prohibit such installation, but rather to allow further discussion of it. Ms. McMenamain said she still did not understand the rationale. Staff agreed to revisit the first paragraph under Option 2, page 5-58.

Mr. Wiljanen said the draft does not specify exactly how high above the roof surface a solar panel should be. Ms. McMenamain agreed that the requirement that solar panels should “Be mounted no more than a few inches above the surface of the roof” (page 5-58) was unspecific. Mr. Liebertz agreed to define this requirement more precisely.

Mr. Liebertz moved to the section “Skylights” (page 5-59). He explained that skylight requirements were similar to those of solar panels. Among the requirements specified, skylights should be removed from public right-of-way visibility and have a non-reflective surface. Property owners should avoid convex-shaped skylights and installation that may damage historic features.

Ms. McMenamain asked if “avoid loss or damage to historic features” implied skylights could be added to historic parts of a building. Mr. Liebertz noted the difference between permissible locations for skylights.

Ms. Solo said the guidelines should specify dimensions and terms more clearly to avoid problems in the review process. Ms. Lawrence said staff would provide such specificity in ACoA review with each applicant. Ms. Solo reiterated her point that the guidelines should be clearer to avoid any confusion in the review process.

Mr. Liebertz said staff could provide only so much specificity since requests can vary. He said there is a statement in the introduction that requires applicants to provide enough detail about their requests for staff to make a well-informed decision; otherwise, the request will have to go before the HALRB. Staff’s goal is to make the guidelines an accessible document.

Ms. Solo reiterated her point that the guidelines should be clearer.

Ms. Liccese-Torres said that because each request is different, staff is reluctant to make the guidelines too rigid. Mr. Liebertz added that staff cannot analyze every house in Maywood to establish the kind of precision Ms. Solo has suggested. Ms. Solo agreed, but added that staff should provide a glossary of defined terms at the end of the document.

Mr. Woodruff said he thought a certain level of ambiguity in the document would be more beneficial to the review process. Ms. Solo said she believed the review standards had varied over the years from staff to staff, so the guidelines should be clearer for the sake of consistency.

Mr. Handerhan asked if the convex skylights looked like a bubble shape. Ms. Lawrence responded yes. She advised against installing them given the fact that water gets trapped between the two layers of plastic.

Staff agreed to examine the proposed height of skylights as raised by Mr. Handerhan.

Mr. Liebertz then moved on to discussing the sections “Roof Vents,” “Asphalt Shingle Roof Replacements,” and “Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Other Equipment Vents.” These are elements that the board frequently reviews without comment, but they still go through the CoA process. As long as vents are not on the façade, they can go through the ACoA process.

Mr. Arkema asked if soffit vents would go through the ACoA process. Mr. Liebertz replied no since most of them are rather visible.

Mr. Arkema asked if adding asphalt sheeting to existing asphalt sheeting would need an ACoA. Mr. Liebertz replied that if it is an in-kind replacement, it would not need to be reviewed.

Mr. Arkema asked if requests to place asphalt sheeting with asphalt shingles could go through the ACoA process. Mr. Liebertz replied that it could, and that asphalt sheeting would be added to this section.

Mr. Liebertz moved to the final section, "Asbestos Shingle Siding." There are homes in Maywood that have original asbestos siding. If in good condition, asbestos siding could remain. If in poor condition, the applicant could request removal since it is a potential hazard. Removal could occur under the ACoA process. Lap siding equal to or less than 5 inches could replace original asbestos siding. If asbestos siding covers original siding, staff will visit the site to determine how much of the original siding is salvageable. Staff would work with the owner to find historically appropriate trim elements that need to be replaced.

Mr. Arkema commented that, in his experience, if there is tar paper between asbestos shingle siding and original wood siding, the wood siding may have difficulty absorbing new paint due to saturation from the tar.

Mr. Liebertz recommended that Mr. Arkema should consider discussing this issue with the HALRB if it was an ongoing problem.

REVIEW OF POTENTIAL ACoAs

Mr. Liebertz asked if there were any additional items that the committee would like staff to consider for the ACoA review process.

Ms. Lawrence asked if staff could add more types of fence designs on page 5-27. Mr. Liebertz said staff could do that.

Mr. Woodruff asked if restoring metal frame windows with wood frame windows could be reviewed as an ACoA.

Mr. Arkema said perhaps a section on window restoration could be added.

Mr. Liebertz said it may be difficult to find evidence of what material a window in question was made of.

Ms. Davis suggested adding language that proposed restorations with accompanying documentation providing information on the original window material could be reviewed under ACoA. Mr. Liebertz agreed.

Ms. Liccese-Torres asked the committee if they wanted to include any restoration material in this language. The committee agreed they did.

Ms. Liccese-Torres said such review may take slightly longer, given the research involved. She asked if there were other items.

Mr. Arkema requested that the addition and replacement of front stairs be added to ACoA review. Mr. Liebertz pointed to page 5-40, which discusses walkway and patio stairs and railings. He noted this section specifies that stairs in the rear of the property could go through the ACoA process, but stairs in the front or street-facing elevations must go through the CoA process. Mr. Arkema suggested adding that front or street-facing elevations must go through the CoA process. Mr. Liebertz took note.

Ms. Solo suggested adding a section describing in-kind exterior changes a property owner could make without a CoA or ACoA. Mr. Liebertz replied that there is a checklist in the existing guidelines that would be updated in the revised draft.

CoA APPLICATION FORM AND ELECTRONIC PERMITTING SYSTEM

Mr. Liebertz reviewed the existing CoA/ACoA application form.

Ms. Davis said she had always found the form somewhat confusing, particularly the parts asking for a site plan plat or scaled drawings.

Mr. Liebertz responded that staff looks for certain pieces of information depending on the type of project. Larger projects like additions need a site plan plat or measured drawings; smaller ones like roof replacement do not. The County's new electronic permitting system that will be released in the coming months will direct applicants to provide specific pieces of information based on their individual project requirements.

Ms. McMnamin asked if staff has considered all possible scenarios for requests when creating an electronic version of the CoA form. Ms. Liccese-Torres said that staff has been considering what boxes to include on the new form.

Ms. Solo asked if staff could present the new electronic form for the committee to review at its next meeting.

Mr. Liebertz said that the County's Department of Technology Services is working on the design. In the meanwhile, he asked if the committee would like to see a sample of a simplified CoA and ACoA form.

Both Ms. McMnamin and Ms. Davis replied yes.

TIMELINE FOR FUTURE WORK

Mr. Liebertz explained the goal for the next meeting would be to address the issues raised at this meeting, show the full draft of the design guidelines, and a modified application form.

The committee added that they would be especially interested in seeing a draft ACoA application.

Ms. Liccese-Torres said that the next meeting, scheduled for August, would occur at a time when a lot of committee members may be on vacation. Mr. Liebertz added that there is a staff vacancy that would make it more challenging to complete the remaining tasks by August. Ms. Liccese-Torres asked if September would be acceptable for the next meeting. The committee agreed.

Ms. Davis suggested staff could email the draft form. Staff agreed.

Ms. Lawrence thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.