

Village of Skaneateles
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 14, 2012

Present: Patricia Blackler, Chairman, HLPC
Karlene Miller, Member
Dave Neibert, Member
Andrew Ramsgard, Member
Beverly White, Member
Carol Young, Member

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Historical Commission

Susan Dove, Applicant, Skaneateles Area Chamber of Commerce

James Lanning, Village Trustee
Carrie Chantler, Skaneateles Journal
Chad Rogers, Skaneateles
Peter Wiles, Skaneateles
Jorge Batlle, Skaneateles
Bob Eggleston, Skaneateles

Absent: Katherine Dyson, Member
Ted Kinder, Member
Mona Smalley, Member

At 7:29 pm Chairman Blackler opened the discussion in the matter of the Chamber's application for directional signage at Genesee and Jordan Streets. She stated that the Trustees want the HLPC's consideration and recommendation regarding the proposed directional signage located within the historic district at the corner of East Genesee and Jordan Streets. She hoped that such signage would eliminate the sandwich signs sometimes used there. The Chairman noted that mock-ups of the proposed signage have been erected at the proposed locations. Mr. Dundon stated to Ms. Dove that the members had just recently received these materials and that the timing precluded scheduling a public hearing on the matter tonight. Consequently, the Commission would not be in a position to take final action on the proposal.

Ms. Dove explained that the Chamber's first choice was to mount the sign on the Village's electric streetlight pole at the corner, but this was not possible because of concerns over the pole's strength. She indicated that the Chamber was looking for a recommendation from HLPC. Ms. Dove stated that over the years many of the Jordan Street and Fennell Street businesses have come to her asking how the Chamber might encourage Genesee Street shoppers to turn the corner and go down the other streets. Tourism is a driving force for the Village, and these

businesses hire our children, contribute to the tax base, contribute to charitable and youth organizations and they provide diversity of products and services. Tougher economic times require ways to help these businesses survive. Businesses like Skaneateles Artisans are struggling and 5 or 6 businesses have gone into that spot at 31/33 Jordan Street in recent years.

Ms. Dove said that on behalf of those businesses on Jordan and Fennell, she has received commitments from several businesses to pay for and be part of the sign. The business owners and Chamber are paying for the sign. They have asked the Village for help in erecting the sign. The sign before the HLPC, is the sign located on the corner of Jordan and Genesee Streets, by the Community Bank. The sign would be located after you turn the corner and are actually on Jordan Street. She indicated that after the Village's request, the Chamber did a prototype so everyone can see the breadth of the sign and how big it is. The height starts at 6 feet and goes up, so it's probably 6 up to 10 feet. All agreed that it is big – a good size sign. Ms. Dove suggested that it be viewed from the south sidewalk on Genesee Street, to get a feeling how those pedestrians may become aware of the directional nature of the sign, that would make them walk across the street and go down Jordan and Fennell. That's why it needs to be visible. She showed the members a rendering of how 5 businesses would be listed on each side of the sign.

Ms. Dove noted the use of the teasel to keep the historic nature of Skaneateles. The pedestal looks just like the parking meter pedestals. The Chamber researched how Cooperstown and Saratoga Springs had handled this issue in historical downtown areas. She showed the members photographs from those communities, noting that there will be no logos, no colors – just business names – keeping it “pristinely Skaneateles.” Member Young suggested the sign might look better on the northwest corner instead. Ms. Dove said there was not as much room on that corner. Members White and Young called it “awfully big;” with Member Young asking about ease of changing a business name. Ms. Dove indicated it is relative easy.

Chairman Blackler urged the members to concentrate solely on the sign at Jordan & Genesee. Member Ramsgard expressed the issue as, “would it be OK if one of these were in the historic district?” Member neibert asked if more businesses could be added. Ms. Dove said that they would keep the sign to 10 and maintain a waiting list. Fennell Street businesses would be on one half of the sign and Jordan Street businesses on the other, Ms. Dove thought. She expressed that this sign is the most important one to get approval for. Member Neibert disagreed, thinking the problem is not for the lower Jordan businesses, but more for those further up Jordan and on Fennell. Chairman Blackler reminded that the other location is not in the historic district. Ms. Dove indicated that their research said that 66% of shoppers stay only on Genesee Street, with the fewest making it to Fennell.

Ms. Dove, in response to questions, indicated that the signs are 2 sided and approximately 7 feet off the sidewalk. They are going to set the bottom limit at 5 to 6 feet for safety. Member Ramsgard suggested that while the sign looks great, the bottom projection on a single-pole sign must be a minimum of 7 feet for handicapped-compliant reasons. Chairman Blackler and Member Miller indicated they like it. Member Ramsgard thinks it looks great in that location and it's important to promote our businesses and our community. Member White thinks it looks handsome, but awfully big. Member Young thinks the scale of one of the other examples would be better and prefers double pole supports.

Chairman Blackler asked, "How do you feel about a sign like this in the historic district?" Member Ramsgard said, "I'm all for it." Member Miller, "I am too. I like it a lot." Chairman Blackler said, "I like it too." Member Young, "I feel a different style would be better. A sign? I think that's fine. That doesn't bother me." Member White, "I like the sign very much. I think it is handsome. I just think it is awfully big. It's no problem (in the historic district)." Member Neibert, "I'm not really that crazy about it."

Mr. Dundon asked how it will be mounted. "Ms. Dove replied, "It's a steel pole with the sleeve on it -- like the parking meters -- placed in concrete in the ground. The hurdle is possible utilities in the area." Ms. Young asked if she were the only one who thinks the scale is off? Member Neibert thinks it is too big. Ms. Dove indicated that in consultation with CEO D'Amico, she believes the sign meets the parameters of a directory sign as outlined in the code.

Member Neibert asked again about the use of the streetlight pole at the corner. Ms. Dove stated that this was the first choice but the pole will not support the sign. Member Ramsgard said that he likes that location better and suggested that the Chamber offer to buy the Village a stronger pole.

Chairman Blackler directed Mr. Dundon to report back that "all the members present, with the exception of Member Neibert, feel fine about having a sign like this in the historic district."

Mr. Battle said he was present at the invitation of the Mayor. "Adam does not issue this type of permit. This comes directly from the Board of Trustees. Your Commission tonight has to decide if do you want to make an informal recommendation to the trustees on the sign. It is up to your Commission whether you want to have a Public Hearing." Chairman Blackler asked for clarification. Mr. Battle said, "It is up to your commission to decide if you wish to get public input and have a public hearing. It is solely your responsibility to determine that. Then your recommendation would go to the Trustees. The CEO is not in the picture. If you decide to just go with the informal recommendation, no public hearing is required. The Trustees have other issues that they have to deal with like the DOT right-of-way."

Member Young said that she thought a public hearing would be a good idea for public input. Member Neibert agreed with Member Ramsgard that the light pole was a better location.

Member Young said, "I make a motion that we have a public hearing." Member Ramsgard seconded the motion, noting the need for consistency in the approach of considering sign applications within the historic district.

Chairman Blackler and Members Neibert, Ramsgard, White and Young voted in favor of the motion. Member Miller voted against the motion. Chairman Blacker noted the motion passed with 5 – 1 in favor.

This portion of the meeting concluded at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to HLPC