

Detroit Historic District Commission

RESOLUTION 23-03

Approval for DTE Gas Infrastructure Improvements

BY COMMISSIONER _____

WHEREAS, the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act, that being MCL 399.205, requires that a permit shall be obtained before any work affecting the exterior appearance of a resource is performed within a historic district, and that the person, individual, partnership, firm, corporation, organization, institution, or agency of government proposing to do that work shall file an application for a permit with the inspector of buildings, the commission, or other duly delegated authority; and,

WHEREAS, Sections 21-2-71 through 21-2-73 of the 2019 Detroit City Code requires that before work commences within an historic district, an interim historic district, or proposed historic district, the person, individual, partnership, firm, corporation, organization, institution, or agency of government shall seek approval of the Detroit Historic District Commission, being the Commission empowered by state law; and,

WHEREAS, the DTE Energy Company in 2013 received approval via Commission Resolution 13-03, for gas infrastructure improvements (to include new exterior gas meters, new underground gas main lines, and new underground gas service lines) in local historic districts under certain prescribed conditions; and,

WHEREAS, the DTE Energy Company has properly submitted an application to the Commission for modifications to the earlier approval, including the treatment of gas lamps in the Indian Village Historic District, and the Commission has duly considered the appropriateness thereof pursuant to Chapter 21, Article II of the 2019 Detroit City Code and MCL 399.205 of the Local Historic Districts Act;

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the need for infrastructure improvements, but notes that they should be accomplished, as feasible, with minimal impact to the city's historic neighborhoods and resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission's Resolution 13-03 is hereby repealed, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DTE Energy Company and its contractors, hereafter "DTE," is hereby issued a Certificate of Appropriateness in all locally-designated historic districts for gas infrastructure improvements under the following conditions:

1. An exterior meter shall be installed on a side or rear elevation of the building if the building is not sited on a corner lot or along a public alley

2. If installing the meter at a building sited on a corner lot or along a public alley, then DTE shall locate the equipment at the side elevation opposite to the public right-of-way
3. If a property owner so chooses, an exterior meter may be painted at the property owner's expense and discretion to blend in or otherwise match the surroundings.
4. DTE shall ask the property owner for a preferred location for exterior meters that is consistent with this resolution and shall install exterior meters in such location unless technically infeasible, hazardous, or prohibited by law. Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as compelling exterior relocations of gas meters except as required by law.
5. Utilize directional drilling for gas line installation where feasible to minimize ground disturbance; and
6. Where disturbance to elements within districts (including sidewalks, streets, shrubs, trees, lawns, curbing, etc) results from the proposed work, then restore the affected area to its pre-construction condition. Historic built/architectural elements disrupted by the work shall be retained, securely stored and properly reinstalled; reproductions shall not be permitted. Any trees, shrubs, perennials, groundcovers or similar permanent plantings (to include underground bulbs, rhizomes, etc.) shall be preserved and protected *in situ* to the extent feasible. DTE shall request that the property owner identify such plantings prior to commencement of the work. At vacant/abandoned properties, Commission staff will consult. Any such designated plants heavily damaged or destroyed by the work (either directly or within one calendar year due to excessive disturbance or transplantation) shall be replaced by DTE Gas Company with reasonably similar species/cultivars of similar size, type, quantity and quality, and installed by DTE's landscape contractors. Such replantings shall be warranted by DTE or its subcontractor for one (1) additional calendar year.
7. Gas lamps that are directly connected to the gas main will be disconnected during the gas main renewal process. The Commission recognizes that new gas mains will be serving residents at an elevated pressure that prohibits operation of these lamps as they stand today. Due to safety concerns (Michigan Gas Safety Code 192.353) DTE will no longer be supporting direct-fed lamps. Residents paying the monthly gas lamp fee will have their gas lamp account discontinued as of the gas cut date. Commission staff is authorized to approve alternate modes of illumination that have minimal impact on the historic environment.

Dated: July 12, 2023