



CITY OF WATERTOWN
Historical Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Elise Loukas, Chair
Marilynne K. Roach, Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member
Richard Glenn, Member
Edward G. McCourt, Member

Minutes: Thursday, January 9, 2025, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Marilynne Roach, Edward McCourt, Richard Glenn, Matthew Walter, Joseph Panto

Member(s) Absent:

Public Present: Eugene Federow, Architect, Kim Ghantous, Applicant, Lior Rozhansky, Applicant, Joyce, Liz 423, James Patnaude, Avatar Construction, Libby Shaw

Staff Present: Larry Field, Senior Planner, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

1. Acceptance of Minutes- November 14, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting.

After brief review a motion was made for the minutes of the November 14, 2024, Historical Commission meeting.

Motion- McCourt made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 10, 2024, Historical Commission meeting as written. Roach seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by McCourt to accept the minutes from the November 14, 2024, meeting.

2. Public Hearing- Continued from November 14, 2024- To determine if the house at **20 Keith St.**, is preferably preserved and if a delay will be imposed. Kim Ghantous, Owner, Lior Rozhansky, Owner, Eugene Federow, Architect

Eugene Federow reviewed briefly some of the aspects of the existing structure on a T-Zone lot, which he referred to as having stairs and hallways out of code and in extremely distressed

condition from being neglected over many years. The house is currently under contract and the sale is contingent upon the buyer being able to demolish this house and start from scratch with a new structure that blends well with the overall neighborhood. Loukas asked him to focus his presentation on the new information that has been gathered since the last meeting. He mentioned a report that was filed that addressed the distressed condition of the building.

Public Comments

Morgan Cohen from 16 Keith stated he is a direct abutter and a Massachusetts Licensed Home Inspector and agreed with Federow's characterization that the house is in deplorable condition and on all levels is suffering from extreme deterioration. Loukas clarified the comments that were made belonged in the last meeting in November and asked if anyone from the public had comments to make regarding the report reviewed at this time.

Commission Discussion

Loukas discussed walking through the building with Field in December and said she saw a building that was not the worst she had seen. The inside was outdated, and the side porch is missing a floor, but this is still a worker's cottage which is an important part of the historical fabric of Watertown.

Glenn went to visit the site that day and said he saw no reason to try to preserve this structure. Panto agreed with Glenn and commented it looked to be in awful shape. He did not think anyone would want to buy it and restore it, Walter agreed with Glenn and Panto. He summarized this is not an old building we would want to save.

Motion- Walter made a motion that the house at 20 Keith St. is not preferably preserved. Panto seconded the motion.

Roll Call- A roll call was taken and Walter, Panto, McCourt, Roach and Glenn agreed with the motion made by Walter. Loukas was against the motion.

The motion passed.

3. 21 Fayette St- Hearing on alleged violation of Chapter 153 demolition of historic buildings- Voluntary Demolition. Consideration of enforcement action. Nazar Vincent, Contractor

James Patnaude from Avatar construction explained they began the demolition a few weeks ago in accordance with the plans adopted by the Historical Commission at the May 2024 meeting. He shared some photos and explained once they began working on the foundation in the front of the house, they realized it was cracking so they took the sides down. He confirmed he would like to put up new side walls and proceed to execute the plans that were approved in May.

Glenn asked to see more photos to illustrate what took place. Walter asked what would be different from the façade of the structure, in the final outcome and Patnaude replied it would not be different. He explained he wants to rebuild the sides and proceed from there. Walter

asked why they did not cease the demolition when they realized there was a problem. Jim replied that the whole front of the house would fall, and that if he wanted to demolish the building before, he would have allowed the front to fall. He explained the job has been halted and he is losing money and never would have done this on purpose.

Loukas said we should have been notified, and she thought they should find a resolution that allows for historic preservation and implement plans the members of the commission agree upon.

Walter said he did not want to delay the project any further. Loukas said she wanted to find a plan to get the house back to what it was before and then move forward from there. Glenn said he agreed and said this was something they could not foresee until they got in and started working on the front foundation. Panto said he saw no reason to delay them any further and in fact they have clearly shown their good intentions of preserving the character of the house. They should repair the side walls and go from there. McCourt said he wanted to go for a solution and not in the direction of voluntary demolition.

Motion- A motion was made by Panto that there was a voluntary demolition that occurred at 21 Fayette St. Walter seconded the motion.

Motion- A motion was made by Panto to lift the stay at 21 Fayette St. and recreate the design approved by the Historical Commission in May. McCourt seconded the motion.

4. CPC Update- Walter reported the CPC is in a new cycle of applications and so far, there is only one application filed. Regarding development of housing at Willow Pond. The application is asking for \$4 million dollars.

The historical inventories for the cemeteries, and for the exterior of the Commanders Mansion Building and Landscape are moving along.

There is still a lot of money in the pots of CPC funds.

5. Agent Report- Phase 2 of the Study of the Southside Areas of Buildings for Distinct Industrial and Residential Coherence. Forms B's are being drafted for row houses and institutional buildings located on Galen St. The next phase will be in March, and we will look for the next report that is due in May.

Field reported that there may be a CPC application for funding for the next cycle, likely to be in August of 2025, and there may be some consideration on applications for more projects for the city as well.

Motion- Roach made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Glenn seconded the motion.

Roll Call- All members of the Commission agreed with the motion made by Roach to adjourn.