



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

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

Minutes: Thursday, September 12, 2024, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

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

Member(s) Absent: Susan Steele

Public Present: Antonio Santiago, Mark Sorial

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes-

- a. May 9, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting.

After brief review a motion was made for the minutes of the May 9, 2024, Historical Commission meeting.

Motion- McCourt made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 9, 2024 Historical Commission meeting as written. Glenn seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by McCourt to accept the minutes.

b. July 13, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting.

After a brief review of the minutes from the July 13, 2024 Historical Commission meeting, a motion was made.

Motion- Roach made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 13, 2024, Historical Commission meeting as written. Walter seconded the motion.

Roll Call-Members were polled by Loukas, and all agreed with the motion made by Roach.

2. Public Hearing-

a. To determine if the house at **15 Pilgrim Rd.** is preferably preserved and if a delay will be imposed. Antonion Santiago, Representative/Mark Sorial, Owner Sorial, the owner was present with his wife Lori. He explained that they want to finish upstairs and do over the attic, by adding dormers and a rear shed dormer, while retaining the 2 gable dormers in the front. There will be an addition of height. Sorial said most other houses on the street have been renovated in similar fashion and many others have shed dormers.

Commission Questions

Roach asked for the plans to be displayed. It was clear from the photographs there were numerous other homes that had shed dormers, such as across the street and up the street two houses.

McCourt, Walter, Panto, and Glenn had no questions.

Public Comment

None

Commission Comments, Questions and Inquiries

Loukas pointed out this house is in a neighborhood with a lot of workers' cottages built for the employees of the Arsenal, and many are considered "World War II veterans' homes." Glenn pointed out they are modifying the home and not tearing it down. Panto said he agreed with Glenn. McCourt said he had no further questions or comments.

Motion- Walter made a motion that the house at 15 Pilgrim Rd. was not

preferably preserved in its current form. McCourt seconded the motion.

Roll Call- A roll call was taken, and all agreed with the motion made by Walter.

3. First Year Demolition Delay Ordinance Statistics

Field reviewed the statistical data from the first year operating under the new Demolition Delay Ordinance

Field noted these highlights of the updated ordinance: the criterion for substantial demolition is more clearly defined, there is now a preliminary review process, and the time period of the delay has been increased from one year to two.

Between August 8, 2023 (passing of the new ordinance) and August 8, 2024, there were 28 applications that went to preliminary review to determine if a public hearing was needed. Of those 28 projects, 12 cases were referred to the Historical Commission for a public hearing. Sixteen of those 28 (57%) did not need a public hearing.

There were 16 applications that proposed a demolition; 9 of those applications were determined to require a public hearing before the Commission.

There were 12 Building Permit Applications for review and 9 (75%) were found to not need a hearing, while 3 cases were referred to the Historical Commission for a full public hearing.

Nine applications went to a public hearing by August 8, 2024. Of the 9, voted for a demolition delay on one application (11%). Later in the year, this applicant came back with a new architect and a new set of proposed plans that preserved most of the building and restored the front facade. The Commission voted to lift the two-year period.

All told, of 25 applications that reached a final decision, 24 (93%) had no delay imposed and one application with a demolition delay had the delay lifted with new plans.

Walter inquired about how the Chair selects a member of the HC to assist her with preliminary screenings each month. Loukas explained her process of using a rolling list of Commissioners. Loukas said she has not asked Walter to participate because he is already spending significant time as the Commission's representative on the CPC. Loukas assured Walter, she would place him on her rolling list of Commission members if he wanted to participate. Walter said he would like to be included.

4. CPC Update by Walter- The CPC has determined that the Willow Park redevelopment project (redevelopment of the existing public housing site, with a combination of replacement public housing units and additional affordable units) is eligible for CPA funding. There is one other housing project that is likely to seek additional funding from the CPC. There are currently no other historic or open space projects.

The CPC also heard information about prior projects. The City Hall Paintings restoration project is moving along, and the paintings will soon be returned to the building's foyer at 149 Main St. The engineers report at Browne House has been completed, as well as the historic landscape report for the Commander's Mansion. The Historic Graveyard proposal is now underway.

Walter also reported that the City Council voted not to accept the CPC's recommendation to fund part of the Mt. Auburn Cemetery proposal on Scots Fence.

Agent Report- Field. The Southside consultants (John Clemson and Claire Dempsey) have completed Phase 1 of the 4-phase study at this point. The consultants have identified key sources for documentation of the area's history and for the history of specific buildings that will be the subject of Form B write-ups. Phase 2 should be completed by November 24th. Phase 3 should be completed by March 25th. Phase 4 should be completed by May 25th.

Field remarked the city has been incredibly fortunate to have all the work on Form Bs done by David Russo, former Chair and Member of the Historical Commission as a volunteer. Russo has mainly concentrated on other parts of the city so the Southside survey will add to his significant contributions over the years.

Motion - Walter made a motion to adjourn meeting at 8:30 pm. Glenn seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by Walter to adjourn.