



CITY OF WATERTOWN
Historical Commission
Administration Building
149 Main St.
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, October 10, 2024, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Marilynne Roach, Edward McCourt, Richard Glenn

Member(s) Absent: Joseph Panto, Matthew Walter

Public Present: Elias Ramos, Arthur Bazyan, Patti Camilli, Smokey, Andy Rojas, Maksim Balyasnyy

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes- September 12, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting
After brief review a motion was made for the minutes of the September 12, 2024, Historical Commission meeting.

Motion- Roach made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 12, 2024, Historical Commission meeting as written. McCourt seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by Roach to accept the minutes as written

2. Public Hearing- to determine if the house at 44 Pilgrim Rd. is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Arthur Bazyan, Applicant/Elias Ramos, Owner, Andy Rojas, Architect

Andy Rojas explained that the current condition of the house in no way meets the needs of this growing family. They were not able to find any historical significance when researching the history of the house. They feel the design fits well into the neighborhood, and the aesthetics are complimentary. The Assessor website listed the house as built in approximately 1944.

McCourt asked Rojas to confirm that a majority of the houses in the neighborhood are a “Cape” style. Rojas agreed. Loukas asked whether the applicant could add to the rear in order to increase the living space. Rojas said “conceptually” yes but there were zoning constraints (particularly lot coverage) that would make this impractical. In addition, the roof line would need to change.

Loukas asked whether there was any public comment on the application. Hearing none, Loukas opened Commission deliberation.

Loukas said this case is similar to 17 Puritan Road in that this is not just a single Cape-style home but a neighborhood of Capes that served as workers’ cottages built to encourage workers to come to Watertown. Loukas said this is an important part of Watertown’s history.

Glenn said he views the house as just a Cape. Glenn explained that these houses built in this era are problematic because they do not meet current building codes. He also thought the neighborhood was very mixed, with larger homes and Capes that have been altered over time. McCourt said he still views this as a neighborhood built for workers, though agreeing that some homes have been altered. Roach said that although 44 Pilgrim is not a “sterling” example the fact that it is a neighborhood is important

Commission members reviewed images of other homes in the neighborhood.

Loukas noted that the Commission’s role is to help Watertown preserve the history of this City and workers cottages are a part of that history. She further explained that just because this family is not able to use this house does not mean there is not another family out there who would love this house and keep this workers cottage.

Motion- Roach made a motion that the house at 44 Pilgrim Rd. was preferably preserved. McCourt seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-1 (Roach, McCourt, Loukas in favor and Glenn against).

Loukas noted that the purpose of a delay is to encourage the applicant to work with the Commission to preserve all or some of the building. McCourt said he would favor a longer delay period to increase the chance the home can be preserved.

Motion- McCourt made a motion for a 2 year delay on the demolition of the house at 44 Pilgrim Rd. Roach seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-1 (Roach, McCourt, Loukas in favor and Glenn against).

3. Commission Discussion- Fire Doors at 9-11 Boyd St.

Before the discussion began, Roach said that the members of the Historical Society recently went on a site visit to see the fire doors in person. Loukas briefly summarized the background: First Path has filed an application with the state that requires consultation with the Historical Commission. Loukas asked the Commissioners to focus on two questions: 1) do we want to provide an opinion about the historical significance of the fire doors, and 2) if so, what is our opinion?

Roach recommended members of the Historical Commission take a site visit to see the doors. It was decided that the Commissioners would try to schedule a visit to the site soon.

- 4. CPC Update-** Walter said the reports on the Cemetery project for Common St. and the Old Burying Grounds are completed. The reports include a summary of work recommended at a total cost of approximately \$700,000.00, at the Old Burying Ground and a summary of work for Common St. totaling approximately \$850,000. The study of the exterior of the Commander's Mansion and the Historic Landscape is nearly finished; recommendations will include ways to celebrate the grand entrance to the mansion.
- 5. Agent Report-** Field reported that he obtained a summary of research on Watertown cemeteries, that was conducted by Dr. Ian Brown, starting in the 1980's while he taught at Harvard University, and while he served as the Assistant Director at Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology. During the 1990's Brown left Harvard and began teaching at the University of Alabama. Brown offered his research collection to the Peabody Essex Museum, and it declined. Given Brown's professional connections with the University of Massachusetts of Amherst, he has asked the university to consider whether they would like the collection. If the collection does not go to UMass Amherst, Brown said he would be interested in talking with the Watertown Free Public Library about the collection.

Motion- A motion was made by McCourt to adjourn the meeting. Roach seconded the motion.

Roll Call- A roll call was taken, and all agreed with the motion by McCourt to adjourn the meeting.