



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, November 14, 2024, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

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

Member(s) Absent: Matthew Walter, Joseph Panto

Public Present: Eugene Federow, Architect, Steve Winnick, Esquire, Kim Ghantous, Applicant, Lior Rozhansky, Applicant

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes- October 10, 2024, Historical Commission Meeting.

After brief review a motion was made for the minutes of October 10, 2024, Historical Commission meeting.

Motion- McCourt made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 10, 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.

2. Public Hearing- 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, Steve Winnick, Esq.

Winnick explained he would be presenting some of the facts of the proposed project,

Ghantous would review the project, and Rozhansky would be able to answer questions about the design.

Ghantous explained she has been involved in other projects like this one, and mentioned rehabbing a house in West Newton, which was designed to complement the other homes in the surrounding area. She explained the new house would have two units with two parking spaces, and each would have two bedrooms on the 2nd floor, and an office on the 1st floor. She described the site as having very substandard conditions that are heavily weeded with many conditions that are degraded, and impossible to work with. Ghantous and Rozhansky stated that overall, the site is an eyesore to everyone on the street. They summarized it would be a hardship to put a delay on this project or for the members of the commission to refuse the demolition permit to issue.

Commission Questions

Glenn had none. McCourt had none. Roach had none. Loukas asked if the house was listed on the MLS. Rozhansky said it was for sale by the owner. Loukas asked what was so impossible to repair and stated lots of houses need repair but are still perfectly good homes once the right attention has been given to it. Loukas inquired about a structural report and there was none. She asked what it was like inside the house, and found out no one from the team had seen the interior of the house, just the exterior. Team members explained that the owner does not always live in the house.

Loukas said she considered this a good example of a worker's cottage which had been built specifically to create homes for people to come to Watertown and contribute to the workforce such as the arsenal, which makes this house deeply connected to the history of the city.

McCourt said he was surprised this house was never on the market and that it had not been inspected. He also summarized there could be something important to the heritage of the house. He said he would not feel comfortable making a decision without actual substance to back up the condition, such as a report or a site visit. Roach pointed out that a heavily wooded site should not get in the way of renovating the actual house. Roach also pointed out that no one had examined the interior of this structure being proposed for demolition.

Public Comments

N/A

Commission Discussion

Loukas said if the inside of the house was so damaged, she would like to see it for herself, either in photos, in a structural report or in person on a site visit. She agreed she could see that the house and its care had been forgotten but she could not make a decision without evidence of what is being said. Glenn said he agreed with McCourt that without at least a picture of the interior, they had no proof of the impossible condition. He said he agreed the exterior looked like a wreck but there was no proof of the inside.

Motion- McCourt made a motion that the development team would get additional information from the owner for the members of the commission to discuss a decision. Roach seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Loukas, Roach, McCourt agreed with the motion. Glenn was against it.

The motion passed

3.CPC Update- There was no update as Walter was not present.

4.Agent Report- Field. The city select historic surveyors, John Clemson and Claire Dempsey have shared a sample of the building index forms for residential and commercial properties with Field. He reported they are making exceptional progress, and he will keep members of the commission informed of future updates from Clemson and Dempsey.

5.Review and Acceptance- Meeting and Filing dates for 2025 were reviewed with members of the commission. Loukas pointed out in prior years there were no dates in the box for December, when there is no meeting scheduled or certain. Jenness said she would make that adjustment, and the dates will be posted on the city website for the public at the end of 2024.

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

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