



**CITY OF WATERTOWN**  
**Historical Commission**  
**Parker School**  
**124 Watertown St.**  
**WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472**

Elise Loukas, Chair  
Marilynne K. Roach, Member  
Joseph Panto, Member  
Matthew Walter, Member  
Richard Glenn, Member  
Jamie Gordon, Member

**Minutes:** Thursday, October 9, 2025, Remote Meeting only 7:00 p.m.

**Historical Commission Members Present:** Elise Loukas, Marilynne Roach, Matthew Walter, Richard Glenn, Jamie Gordon

**Member(s) Absent:** Edward McCourt, Joseph Panto

**Public Present:** Peter Zagorianakos, Andrew Izsak, Susan Nye, Jacky Van Leewen, Andrew's Iphone, Toby Reed, Stephen Corbett, Jonathan Miller, Carrie Souto, David Sprogis, Doris (no last name), Gerard (no last name), Natalie Chapman

**Staff Present:** Larry Field, Senior Planner; Susan C. Jenness, Administrative Specialist; Erika Jerram, Director, Community Design

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**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Acceptance of Minutes-**

**A. Review and acceptance of Minutes from September 11, 2025, Historical Commission Remote Meeting**

The minutes from September 11, 2025, the Historical Commission Remote Meeting were reviewed. There were no modifications requested.

**Motion-** A motion was made by Roach to accept the minutes from the September 11, 2025, meeting as written. Gordon seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** All members present agreed with the motion made by Roach.

#### **4. Public Hearing**

Chair Loukas noted that the first case on the agenda (18-20 Washburn St)) was continued to the October 9, 2025, meeting and will be heard tonight and that the second case (45-59 Mt. Auburn St) was also continued to this meeting but will be further continued to the November 13, 2025 meeting. The third case (1 Rosary Drive) is on the agenda for the first time.

- A. **18-20 Washburn St.** to determine if the house at 18-20 Washburn St. is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Jonathan Miller, Triad Alpha Development/ Peter Zagorianakos, Owner

Jonathan Miller of Triad Alpha Development presented existing conditions of the 41,000 sq. foot site, abutter images, and a parcel survey. He said the 18-20 Washburn Street home is in an easement that allows access to the proposed development site in the rear.

Peter Zagorianakos/Triad Alpha Development discussed the proposed development and its background. He has proposed four or five different conceptual plans for a residential development since 1995. He shared the current conceptual plan for nine townhouses and a building with nine “flats,” for a total of 18 new units.

The plan is for a group of three townhouses at the front of the lot, with a group of three facing Washburn St. and facing Franklin St. In the rear there is a proposed group of nine flats abutting the commercial property in the rear. There is also a large open space. Miller brought the photos back up and the presentation ended.

#### **Commission Questions.**

Walter asked about ownership of the 18-20 Washburn property. Zagorianakos explained he owned the house for about 15 years and it has been rented to tenants. Walter asked if the easement through 18-20 Washburn Street was the only access to the rear property and Zagorianakos confirmed the parcel is “landlocked,” and said this is the only way to provide access.

Roach said there seemed to be other access points through Franklin Street. Zagorianakos confirmed there are two other access easements but said that they are 18 feet and 12 feet and not wide enough. Roach asked what the developer learned in doing historic research. Zagorianakos

said he was told the house was designed by a famous architect. He said the house was declining physically by the time it was purchased 15 years ago. The house was sided in vinyl and very little maintenance has been done over the years. He acknowledged not making improvements since he bought the house.

Glenn clarified that parking would be placed underneath the newly proposed buildings and would not be visible to the residential neighborhood.

Loukas asked if their team explored preserving the house at its present location or moving it. Zagorianakos said they have not looked at those options.

Gordon inquired whether there was any way of widening the easements and Zagorianakos said no.

### **Public Comments**

Andrew Izsak from 17 Otis St. thought that vinyl siding had no negative impact on the historical/architectural aspects of the house, but it may have helped the exterior condition hold up better in tough New England weather. He stated that he and his wife and neighbors believe this would be a good house to restore to fit in with similar special houses that formed the surrounding streets in the neighborhood.

Public comments submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation prior to the meeting were submitted for the record. The comments (summarized below) were provided by David Russo, Robin Bernstein, Joy Arciano, Marylene Altieri, Susan Musinsky, Lisa Feltner, and Doris Coe.

David Russo- 162 Lovell Rd. Russo has done considerable research on this property over the years, and his findings include the following:

According to the building permit, the house was designed in 1898 by architect Charles Brigham, a native son of Watertown. Brigham was educated in our public schools, graduating at age 15 in 1856 in the first class of Watertown High School. Thereafter, he became an apprentice in the of Calvin Ryder, a Cambridge architect. This experience continued for three years and then he was a draftsman with perhaps Boston's greatest architect of the time in Boston, Ridley J. F. Bryant.

Mr. Russo provided additional detail about the life and work of Charles Brigham and the reasons why this house should be found historically significant by the Commissioners.

Robin Bernstein- a resident of Otis St. wrote that demolition of 18-20 Washburn St. would be detrimental to the architectural and historical details of the neighborhood.

Joy Arciano emphasized the following points about the structure and the impact of Charles Brigham on the neighborhood:

- Importantly associated with the architectural history of Watertown and the Commonwealth
- Architecturally significant due to its association with Charles Brigham
- Important to the context and integrity of the Washburn Street neighborhood
- A meaningful part of our neighborhood's social and cultural history

Marylene Altieri--40 Otis St. said she and her husband think the row of houses on Washburn St. typifies the neighborhood architectural unity that dates to its original construction. She further stated that demolition of this house, an integral part of this group, would be detrimental to the rest of this 19<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood.

Susan Musinsky-- a resident of Otis St. since 2005. Since her family acquired their home in 2005, have put up historical markings, maintained the historical colors of a Victorian house of the past, and honored the code of living in a historical district in this community. The idea of demolishing a historically integral home has great potential to alter the neighborhood. She also commented on the lack of community dialogue. They were invited to one meeting in the winter with a developer, and had no further communications from the town, the developer, or anyone in the community.

Lisa Feltner- The City Councilor wrote that Charles Brigham was not only world renowned for his significance as an architect in his day, but he was also known as a prominent civic leader. She attended a public meeting on this project attended by at least 100 people and not one person endorsed the proposed project. She attached the 2010 Vision Statement for the Neighborhood Association to show neighborhood consensus.

Doris Coe-- a resident of Otis St. wrote that she was not only concerned with the impact of losing this house, but she was also gravely concerned with the impact the volume of new residents would have to the area. She was very concerned with traffic and whether the style of the new homes would fit into the neighborhood. She called for the Commissioners to delay the project to find a suitable plan that worked for a long time with members of the neighborhood.

**Public Hearing Closed-** Loukas closed the public comments once every interested party had spoken or had their letters read into the record.

## **Deliberations**

Loukas asked each member to provide initial comments on the demolition application.

Roach said that Brigham is significant as an architect and that the neighborhood's history is evident in walking down the street and looking at the houses. She said that the vinyl siding may hide architectural features that further enhance the house's value.

Gordon said she is struggling with this application because she sees both a lovely neighborhood and the opportunity for new neighbors and 18 new homes. She noted that Councilor Feltner's comments had suggested there were other means of access to the property.

Glenn shared Gordon's concern about losing new housing but said the neighborhood has a coherent style, a famous architect is responsible for this house, and there is a strong response from the community about saving the house.

Walter agreed that the house is associated with a famous architect, the neighbors make valid points about the neighborhood history and, while there have been some exterior changes to the house, he still sees significance.

Loukas said she agreed with Walter that it is clearly significant as a Brigham house and this is not a close case in her mind.

Roach said, in response to comments about the housing opportunity, that moving the house would save it and allow for the housing. Loukas added that this option had not been explored.

**Motion-** Walter made a motion that the house at 18-20 Washburn St. is historically significant and preferably preserved. Glenn seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Members of the Commission voted 5-0 for the motion.

Loukas recited the procedural options for demolition delay—from no delay to two years—and asked for discussion.

Roach said longer was appropriate and suggested two years. Gordon was concerned about discouraging the housing project. Glenn said one to two years seemed appropriate. Walter said he was more conflicted about the delay period and would want to know more about the access options. He is leaning towards two years. Loukas noted that two years may be needed for the project to go through the process anyway.

There was discussion of how to obtain more information about whether access options exist and whether to impose a demolition delay based on current information or continue the case. Ultimately, there was agreement that a delay could be imposed and that subsequent exploration of preservation options would provide an opportunity to confirm whether other access routes are feasible.

**Motion-** Glenn made a motion for a demolition delay of two years. Walter seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Members were polled and the motion passed 5-0.

- B. 1 Rosary Place- to determine if the building at One Rosary Drive is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Steve Corbett, Representative

Corbett explained that 1 Rosary Place was the Dominican Sisters convent built in 1964. It has 45 dormitory style rooms and has been vacant since 2020. It has an industrial look to the exterior that does not blend well with the 59 townhouses on the campus. Re-use of the building on the site has not been successful due to lack of parking and other considerations. The Sisters have been trying to sell the building for the last five years. Corbett said it has become an eyesore.

The proposal for the new structures involves pitched roofs and clapboard siding. The development has received approval from the Zoning Board. They have received favorable comments from the townhouse neighbors.

Corbett noted that one of the original structures of Rosary Academy remains and does an excellent job of representing the Academy's history. The St Joseph Hall building was built in 1934 and was the school. It was restored by Metrowest Collaborative and is now used for 25 elderly affordable housing units.

Corbett also noted that the Masonic Temple on Church St. was demolished to build new housing a few years ago, as well as Watertown High School which was found preferably preserved but no delay was imposed. Corbett asked if this structure was found preferably preserved, the Commission consider not placing a delay.

Commissioners were interested in viewing the plans, but no one had any inquiries.

## **Public Comments**

Toby Reed, a resident of Sienna Village, was present to make comments. She stated that the building at 1 Rosary Drive has become a problem with frozen pipes, and gushing water and the vacant building has attracted undesirable users. She referred to the style of the building as very drab and commented that St Joseph Hall, the preserved part of the original campus has lovely stain glass windows and will live on as a reminder of the Dominican Sisters.

Reed also confirmed she is one of numerous others who are in favor of the new development.

## **Public Comments were closed.**

## **Deliberations**

Loukas read from the Form B filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which provided information on Rosary Academy and particularly on 2 Rosary Drive (St Joseph Hall). Loukas said for an initial round of comments.

Walter said the building is not significant. Glenn said it was a non-descript building. Roach said it is part of the Academy's history but not worth fighting for. Gordon said it is a plain building and apparently in poor condition. Loukas noted that Rosary Academy's history is preserved through the restoration of St Joseph Hall and agreed the building is not significant.

**Motion-** Walter made a motion that the building at 1 Rosary Drive was not preferably preserved. Gordon seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Members were polled and the motion passed 5-0.

## **C. CPC Update**

Walter reported that the signage for the painting restoration project in City Hall had arrived and it explains a lot about the history and Watertown and the painting restoration project. Walter said he hoped everyone got the funding proposal for the Commanders Mansion and that the CPC plans to have a presentation of the proposal at the next meeting. Walter will give an update at the next meeting.

#### **D. Agent Report**

Field reported he was away for the presentation on the Southside Historical Survey on September 25, 2025. Loukas shared that she, Jerram, Roach, Gordon, Glenn and Walter were present. Each felt that the talk (and the study itself) had provided valuable insights into the neighborhood's history.

#### **E. Adjournment**

**Motion-** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gordon and seconded by Roach.

**Roll Call-** All members agreed with the motion made by Gordon. The meeting ended at approximately 9 p.m.