



**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  
Andrew Thompson, Member

**Minutes:** Thursday, November 13, 2025, Hybrid Meeting, (Zoom and Philip Pane Hearing Room) 7:00 p.m.

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

**Member(s) Absent:** N/A

**Public Present:** Nathan Turner, (Marguiles Perrussi) Andy Mann, Triad Group

**Staff Present:** Erika Jerram, Director, Community Design, Susan C. Jenness, Administrative Specialist

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Loukas opened the meeting accordingly.

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Roll Call**

3. **Acceptance of Minutes-**

- A. **Review and acceptance of Minutes from October 9, 2025, Historical Commission Remote Meeting-** Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the October meeting and

voted on them.

**Motion-** Walter made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 9, 2025, Historical Commission meeting. Gordon seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** All Commissioners agreed with the motion to accept the minutes from October 9, 2025, Historical Commission meeting.

#### 4. Public Hearing

- a. To determine if the house at **45 Mt. Auburn St.** is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Andy Mann, Triad Group Representative

Andy Mann introduced the project team and previewed the elements of the presentation. This is Triad Groups second project in Watertown, they have had one public meeting, and a second one is scheduled next month. Triad examined possibilities for preserving the building, but none was feasible. Mann explained that Brian Leaver from Epsilon, a Historic Preservation Consultant was present to review the history of why preservation was not feasible, and to also review a list offering mitigation on the loss of the building to the city.

Leaver identified the structure as Queen Anne style circa 1895 originally a single-family home used as a residence and since the 1990's to house various businesses in addition to housing. This example of the Queen Anne Style lacked decorative spindles and turrets common in high style Queen Ann architecture but had one notable feature which was some yellow pine flooring. The house was owned by the O'Halloran family, owned by a local janitor. The architects or builders of the original structure were not notable, nor were there any known historical events which took place in the home. The existing house today has vinyl siding, the porch was infilled, and the structure has had a number of alterations over the years. Leaver compared this house to the Queen Anne at 13 Oliver St. this was not a high style Queen Anne.

To mitigate the loss of this building the team offered to historically document and archive the history of the building to donate to the city. Offer the building free of charge for removal to another site, offer the building for salvage for free, install interpretive panels on the history of Watertown as part of the proposed development. Delaying the demolition would impede proposed developments timeline.

Nathan Turner, Architect explained they tried to incorporate the new development into the current structure but found they needed to expand the lower footprint to support the upper-level configurations.

The benefits of the development as presented would be 153 new units of housing in studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3-bedroom units. 15% would be affordable housing. Vehicular access would be from Taylor St., and the new proposal would increase the green space enhancing the overall site and increase the drainage and green house emissions. The new proposal was designed with the concept of a vibrant downtown community, that is supported by community members and what is desired in Watertown Square.

### **Commission Questions**

Roach had none. Gordon asked if they were also offering to pay the cost of moving the building if someone agreed to take it to a new location and the moving fee was not included. Gordon said there was no building card for this house but the building across the street was designed by Alberto Haines, who also designed the Otis Building up closer to the square and several others in Watertown on Russell Ave and Bates Rd. Her information was found on a local site for Alberto Haines and Charles Brigham architecture. Gordon asked if the 7 parking spots on Taylor St. were for retail space or part of the overall parking. Nate said they were for the overall parking spots. Gordon sited numerous measurements on Taylor St. and asked if they would turn the house around to front Taylor St. Nate answered the grading would not allow for that. Gordon confirmed when they looked at saving the structure if they had looked at fronting on Taylor St. and they had not. Panto asked if there were any other buildings in this project that would come before this commission and there were not. Thompson inquired how they would offer the house for salvage and Mann said they would have a company come in and take it. Glenn had no questions. Loukas pointed out that many of the building cards were for alterations on the inside of the structure, not the outside. She also found a card for someone who took siding off the building which is a preservation effort. She said that she found the statement there were substantial alterations of the building to be deceptive because most of the work was done inside the structure. She pointed out what they are putting there is a box compared to the history of Watertown and she wondered if there was something they could do to incorporate this house into the new design. She pointed out the owner of the studio might support this project but this commission cares about historic preservation, especially close to Watertown Square.

Roach pointed out she noticed the windows had been changed but the structure seemed very intact. She remembered when the owner took down the siding and told her he did not want to do that, but he got so many compliments because it was recognized. She also stated if it was one of Alberto Haines' structures, that would be even more interesting. Loukas said the siding was restored in 2002 by Robert Collusion. Gordon asked if they went to the history section in Watertown Free Public Library to research. They did and she asked if they had told him about the funeral home that was housed there years ago. She pointed out the first building card was to turn the house into a funeral home and it became the Rockwell Funeral Home in the 1930s and 1940s and in 1996 they moved to join the Macdonald Funeral Home to create MacDonald Rockwell Funeral Services, still

in existence today. Gordon said she just wanted to confirm when they did their research, that none of that information had become revealed to them. He confirmed that it was not uncovered in their research.

### Public Comments

N/A

### Commission Discussion

Walter started by stating that this is a clear example of a well-preserved Victorian structure in a prominent location, but it is not to the level of preferably preserved. Walter also stated that incorporating this structure would also impact on the feasibility and functionality of the new structure and weighing the two, and the success of the project is more important to the community. It would not be preferably preserved but it would be historically significant. Gordon would find the structure historically significant. Walter affirmed he agreed with the applicants, and he would find the building not preferably preserved. He also asserted that incorporating the existing structure was not always a good approach and that should be the purview of the planning staff. Gordon suggested it was brought up at the community meeting that there would be trash dumpsters on Taylor St. next to the path, and that if they turned the house to front the building they could preserve the structure. She said she would like to see them explore that option, but they had not even examined that possibility. Panto was leaning towards Walter's reasoning that this might not be one worth saving, but he also agreed it would be great to find a way to incorporate Watertown history into such a prominent location. Glenn stated he had a background in contracting and he thought the Commission should not be second guessing this project. He said he was weighing 150 new units with a possible 1 or 2 units in this house. He finished by saying this could be a historically significant building, but he would not want to delay the overall project. Thompson said he was a fan of slate roofs and said he would like to see a more structured approach to the possible salvaging of parts of the building. Roach said she thought the building was significant and that it would be a good idea for the developers to explore with a different entrance to the building. Loukas stated that just because you created a plan that does not incorporate what is already there, you get to say well our plan is bigger than this house.

The Commission discussed what could happen if a delay is imposed, so that they would be able to explore options other than demolition. The Commission discussed the process for a project that has a delay imposed for sitting down with the planning staff to discuss options to explore to lift the delay.

**Motion-** Gordon made a motion that the house at 45 Mt. Auburn St. is historically significant and preferably preserved. Roach seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Walter and Rich voted against the motion, the remainder of the commission were in favor.

Walter stated he did not believe it was in the interest of the community to impose a delay. Loukas stated she wanted an opportunity to work with the developers to see if there was a way to preserve the history of the building, and if there isn't she has no problem lifting the delay. Gordon stated she was happy to know other delayed projects have found solutions that help preserve the history of the city while they are finding ways to create more housing and hold on to significant buildings. She also stated she puts a lot of time into her research for the good of Watertown. The commission discussed various lengths for a delay.

**Motion-** Gordon stated because this building was so close to Watertown Square she made a motion to impose a two-year delay on the demolition of 45 Mt. Auburn St. Roach seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Matthew, Thompson and Glenn were against the motion. The rest of the commission voted in favor of the motion.

- a. To determine if the house at **157 School St.** is preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. Kenneth Leitner, Esq., Representative Chair Loukas recused herself for professional reasons and left Commissioner Panto to Chair the public hearing on 157 School St. Attorney Leitner presented the project

Attorney Leitner appeared on behalf of Robert Kane, representative of his sister's estate. On the easterly side of School St. between Boylston and Porter, with about 9 houses on that side of the street. The street was named School St. because this was where one of the first schools in East Watertown was built on the corner of Common and School St. Leitner had 2 architects assess the house and they came back with Greek Classical built around 1923. Of the houses on the street a number have hip roofs and the others have gables. Each house started off with a front porch and some enclosed them over the years. These houses were built to house those employed by BF Goodrich and Arsenal. Leitner could not find any historical information about this particular house or those who lived in it during his research.

#### **Commission Questions- N/A**

#### **Public Comments**

Dimitric Konstinopoulos from 153 School St. said he has had an issue with rodents the last few years and wanted to know if they demo this house who is going to be responsible to address any issues with the rodents. Panto explained the HC could not address those types of issues but Attorney Leitner might be able to help. Leitner assured the residents that in order to proceed with the project, they would have to have approval from a number of city offices and the rodent control would be addressed in those administrative

sign off process.

Panto opened the hearing back up for Commissioner discussions. Walter said he felt this house was not historically significant and he did not feel this house should have gone before the whole commission. Panto said he was part of the preliminary screening process and because they did have questions and that was why it went before the whole commission so that everyone could weigh in. Panto agreed with Walter that the house was not preferably preserved. Glenn agreed. Walter agreed to make a motion.

**Motion-** Gordon made a motion that the house at 157 School St. was not significant or preferably preserved. Walter seconded the motion.

**Roll Call-** Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by Gordon.

- 5. CPC Update-** Walter updated Commissioners on items from CPC that were directly related to Historical funding. He reported that Chris Nixon, of Capitol Projects had appeared before the CPC Committee about the study done on the Commanders Mansion to assess the conditions of the exterior of the building and the historic landscape. Nixon focused on the conditions of the building portion of the study and explained the work had been assessed and scheduled to be addressed by items of most important to the least important. The city is going to be asking for \$610,000. to get the work in the studies out to bid to start addressing the projects, beginning with a project to address the double hung sash windows and to replace the elevator which are eligible to be part of the historic study repairs. Walter had a copy of the mansion report that he was willing to share with any commissioners who were interested.

Panto excused himself for the remainder of the meeting.

- 6. Agent Report-** Jerram was present as the agent for the meeting. She explained that Field is stepping back further from Historical Commission duties and the city hired a new planner for housing, another indication that Field's Day to day work is diminishing. Jerram said she wanted all commissioners to feel welcome to come to her for anything they needed help with.

## 7. Adjournment

**Motion-** Gordon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roach seconded the motion.

**Poll-** Commissioners were polled and all agreed with the motion to adjourn the meeting.