

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, February 8, 2018
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Susan Steele, David Russo, Joseph Panto, Elise Loukas, Marilynne Roach, Matthew Walter, Thomas Melone (arrived late)

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan C. Jenness

Elise Loukas, the Chairperson of the Historical Commission opened the meeting and explained the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission.

- 1. Public Hearing Continuation- 31 Charles St.-** to consider the Demolition Permit Application submitted for an existing single family cape style house with vinyl siding and an asphalt roof, built in approximately 1960. A new two family style home is proposed. Kane Built, Inc, Owners/ Heather Dorey, Applicant.

Michael Quinn, the owner of the property appeared before the HC and began by passing around a new set of photographs taken on the street showing a variety of styles of homes. He said 31 Charles St. was a young house on the street and a mix of Cape Style, and Colonial. He explained that the street consists mostly of 2 family homes with a few 3 stories high. He found no historical relevance of the building.

Russo clarified that the hearing was continued last month after the weather caused a significant delay in the delivery of the meeting packages to the members of the HC.

Walter, the newest member of the HC asked for clarification about the role that the HC had in reviewing proposed projects before their board.

Loukas read Section 3.3 of the demolition delay ordinance to assist Walter. Russo explained that in accordance with the town's Comprehensive Plan, the resources protected by the HC included the buildings themselves, as well as the neighborhoods. Massing, materials and compatibility with the neighborhood are considered.

Panto asked if the applicant had spoken with the neighbors and what the comments were coming back to him. He wondered if the proposed building was significantly larger than what was there now.

Schreiber explained that what was here now in these plans was a concept plan and that zoning would be reviewing the actual plan as it would set into the neighborhood. Schreiber explained that Planning does not review all plans going in to the town.

Public Comments

N/A

Commission Discussion

Walter said that the proposed house is larger than the small house on the left, and roughly the same size as the house on the right, similar to #21.

Russo noticed the original old windows, no unusual dormers or additions and that it had the architectural integrity that it was built with. He said that the house was designed by an architect named Mr. Northrup.

Loukas added that the neighborhood was already made of a mix of buildings.

Panto made notice of the trees out back and Quinn said that they would not all be coming down.

Motion: Russo made a motion that the house at 31 Charles St. was not a significant building. Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house at 31 Charles St. was not a significant building. (Melone who arrived at the end of the public hearing abstained from the vote).

2. **Public Hearing Continuation– 166 Waverley Ave.** – Request for authorization to review the demolition of a wooden garage, built in approximately 1926, which was previously demolished without a permit. No new structure is proposed. Traolach Cahillane, Owner/Applicant.

Traolach Cahillane appeared before the HC and apologized about the misunderstanding of the meeting date last month. He went on to explain that the accessory structure, a 2 car garage was in hideous condition and had no value worth saving.

Russo asked why this happened.

Cahillane explained that he had begun small projects with home which became shock to him when he learned more about the condition of the property. He was unfamiliar with the permitting process and had no idea he needed a permit to demolish a garage in that condition. When he finally got around to going in to the Building Department to obtain permits, he mentioned the garage demolition had already taken place and found out he had made a terrible mistake in demolishing the garage. He apologized to the HC and said he had apologized profusely to the town staff as well.

Melone asked if he owned the building, and Cahillane said he owned it as a rental property and that he had no intentions of building a new structure to replace it.

Schreiber explained that the house was non-conforming with zoning and that he might not be able to build a new garage on this lot.

Walter said the he felt like Cahillane had made an honest mistake.

Panto pointed out that no one came to say that they were angry that the garage was taken down.

The HC held a brief conversation.

Motion: Russo made a motion that the garage at 166 Waverley Ave. was not a significant building. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the garage at 166 Waverley Ave. was not a significant building.

3. **Public Hearing – 171-173 Summer St-** an existing two family colonial style house with vinyl siding and an asphalt roof, including a tool shed, built in approximately 1945. Two town house units are being proposed. Joseph Deodato, Owner/Applicant

Loukas called the project and the applicant was not present. There were no abutters present. After a brief discussion, the HC voted to continue the public hearing.

Motion: Roach made a motion to continue the public hearing for 171-173 Summer St. Panto seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached continuing the public hearing on 171-173 Summer St.

4. **Minutes-** from January 11, 2018 Historical Commission (HC) Meeting. After a brief discussion a motion was made to adopt the minutes as modified.

Motion: Russo made a motion to accept the minutes as modified. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adopting the minutes as modified.

5. Discussion Items

- a. East Branch Library Update- Schreiber reported that all the documents removed from the East Branch Library have been moved to the Police Station to be stored for the time being. The HC said they would like to send a sub-committee over to review the contents and asked Schreiber to speak to town staff to set up an arrangement to do so.
- b. Orchard House Update- The HC requested scheduling a site visit in order to create a punch list of needed repairs and updates. They would like to take the list they make in doing so and explore possibilities for seeking donations and financial assistance to defray the costs at Orchard House associated with the needed list of repairs. They plan to discuss this further at the March meeting.
- c. Landmark Designations- 77 Riverside is not a town owned property and the owner was not aware of the need to register the landmark designation with the registry of deeds. The Planning Office has contacted the owner and let them know the property would need to be registered and that they would be happy to use the town attorney to process the registration after they have completed the necessary landmark designation forms.
- d. 2018 Historical Preservation Awards

The HC asked the clerk to see if May 17, 2018 was available for a date to hold the HPA at the Commanders Mansion. The clerk will book the date and update the nomination packages and begin distributing notice to residents and the public that the nomination process has begun. The clerk will update the web site and send out a notify me. The HC will consider other ways to alert the public about the opening of the nomination process.

- e. Russo mentioned that he received an order for a Historical Plaque and that while he was researching the property he discovered some noteworthy information about the history of the property. He wrote an email to the resident and said he will follow it up with a formal letter they can keep on file in the residence to pass down over the years.
- f. Loukas and Russo reviewed a letter received by Massachusetts Historic Commission regarding a signage project proposed by Epsilon involving the Arsenal on the Charles Project. After a review of the proposed signage, MHC has found the signage will have no adverse impact on the Arsenal Historic District.
- g. Loukas and Russo reviewed a letter received by Massachusetts Historic Commission notifying Gus Fraser of the Mt. Auburn Cemetery that they have found the proposed project at Bigelow Chapel will have no adverse impact on Mt. auburn Cemetery.

