



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Historical Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Elise Loukas, Chairperson
David Russo, Vice Chairperson
Thomas Melone, Member
Susan Steele, Member
Marilynne K. Roach, Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member

Minutes: Thursday, March 14, 2019 Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Chair, Marilynne Roach, Matthew Walter, Thomas Melone, David Russo, Vice Chair, Susan Steele, Joseph Panto

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Public Present: Mathew McNeff, Arthur Harutunyan, Astor Khachatran

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan C. Jenness (adopted April 11, 2019)

- 1. Public Hearing-** 19 Loomis Ave. a 1-family colonial style house built in approximately 1952 Arthur Harutunyan, applicant/owner.

Arthur Harutunyan the owner of the house appeared with his wife Astor Khachatran to review the proposed project with the Historical Commission, (HC). They reported the following; They have been residents of Watertown since 1998, and purchased this house in 2004. They have two children who are older now and they would like to have 2 separate homes on the lot. They are trying to keep the shape of the new house similar and also plan to use similar materials.

Loukas asked if they knew about the history of the house and former owners. They said they found no historical or architecturally significant information about the house when they researched the history of the house.

Melone asked if they plan to keep the house. They said they like Watertown and plan to remain in this house but would like 2 separate dwellings with 2 separate deeds in the future.

Steele mentioned to Harutunyan that she thought Hardie Board was a good material for the exterior of the house. Walter echoed Steele's comment about materials.

Public Comments

Loukas read one email into the record that was received by Marian Lamparian who wrote in opposition to the demolition. Her letter reported the following.

Lamparian reported that the dynamic of the neighborhood consisting of Loomis Ave and adjacent to Downey St., has always been that of a mix of single and 2 family homes. Lamparian wrote that recently 11 Loomis Ave and 14 Downey St. were approved for demolition and are going to be replaced with larger 2 family structures. Lamparian said that this turn of events is causing overcrowding on the lots because single family lots are redeveloped with larger structures and more people living on the lots.

She also said that parking has grown crowded from the increase in automobiles as there are usually 4 automobiles to each 2 family house on Loomis Ave. She also mentioned the potential strain this has on the school system, roads and increasing traffic.

Public Hearing Closed.

Commission Discussion

Russo reported that he had researched the structure beginning with the building cards. He found that the house was originally owned and built by Frank Scaltrato who lived at 10 Sparkill St. By January of 1995, Leonard Cutone who was the new owner added a second floor. In 2004, the house was purchased by Arthur Harutunyan and in 2005, he built a new staircase from the 2nd floor up to the attic. Russo said he found nothing remarkable about the history or the architecture of the existing structure.

Loukas summarized that so far it seemed there was no historical significance to the current structure. She said that all the issues in the letter by Lamparian are about current zoning which is all outside of the purview of the HC.

Roach affirmed that consideration about traffic is not allowed for this board. She also said that this project will alter the neighborhood.

Panto said he agreed the house was not a significant one, and that parking is not this board's purview. He said he thought the house on this lot now is cute, and it will become crowded as a result of the new structure which is allowed by zoning.

Steele said she agreed with Panto about the lot, and that this new larger structure will have an effect on the current light and sunshine on that lot. She said she wished that zoning could step in.

Melone said he did not see the current house as being architectural or historically valuable. He reported that he looked at the block so he could experience what was around this house. He said it is a rather mixed area with single and two families. He said that mixed zoning

allows for development that covers more of lot. He summarized that most of the issues brought up here are not the responsibility of this commission.

After hearing from everyone, Loukas asked if anyone was ready to make a motion.

Motion: Melone made a motion that the house at 19 Loomis Ave. was not preferably preserved. Walter seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house at 19 Loomis Ave. was not preferably preserved.

2. **Minutes-** From February 14, 2019 Historical Commission Meeting.

After a brief discussion a motion was made to adopt the minutes from February as modified.

Motion: A motion was made by Russo to adopt the minutes as modified. Roach seconded the motion.

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

3. **Discussion Items**

a. Historic Preservation Awards 2019

Jenness reported that save the date notices had been sent directly the Town's Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Community Preservation Act Committee, Town Council, and to members of the community who had previously been involved at the staff level, or at the level of a commission aiding in the historic preservation of Watertown.

Joseph Panto, accompanied by his wife, had redesigned a flyer concept from last year with the addition of some photographs from the event in 2018. Copies of the flyer were handed out at the meeting to members of the HC to distribute and hand out around town to publicize the event.

During a discussion on media outlets, Jenness agreed to reach out to local news with a copy of the event flyer for publication.

b. A brief discussion on the Plaque Program was held regarding the commission of duplicate plaques in the event of plaque loss or destruction. It was discussed by the commission that the re-ordering of a plaque in the event of loss or destruction has only occurred once in the years of the Plaque Program. The cost of the plaque is \$50- for the craftsman, and the service charge for the Town is \$15. The board decided that the cost of the plaque whether a new one, or a replacement plaque is reasonable enough for all the work that goes into making the arrangements for the plaque.

- c. 41 Paul St- Schreiber reported that he had sent an email to the owner of 41 Paul St. inviting him to discuss his plans for the structure at 41 Paul St. with both himself and Magoon, the Director of Planning. Schreiber has not heard back since sending an email last week.
- d. Demolition Delay Ordinance- Loukas requested members of the commission go home and take a look at the Demolition Delay Ordinance. She pointed out that each member of the board has a very unique perspective of the work they do as a commission, and also in the way they see the body of the Demolition Delay Ordinance. She asked members of the board to look at the Ordinance from their perspective, then point out language they would like to modify or delete. She also invited them to craft some of their own language they would like to see in a future version of the Demolition Delay Ordinance. Loukas said she would like to hold a discussion about their findings at the next meeting.

Jenness will send a Word copy of the document to each member of the commission so that they could track changes onto the document and send them back to Jenness who will distribute them for their discussion next month.

- e. Russo reported he had recently written 4 historical research letters he had which were distributed to his colleagues and staff.

Three of the letters were written as a result of the research Russo had done during the Demolition Delay proceedings for 41 Paul St. for the addresses listed below.

- 33 Paul St.
- 43 Paul St.
- 15 Palmer St.

The fourth letter was written to the owner of *81 Coolidge Hill Rd.* The letter contained details of the research he had done after attending a meeting several months prior. The meeting was held to discuss the legend of an Italian internment camp that is said to have existed on the property during World War II.

Russo said he found a permit dated May of 1953 for the demolition of what could have been the barracks. He said the Assessors records indicated the building was estimated to measure 20 x 50 feet, and composed of wood with a tar paper roof. There were no permits found by Russo on file with the town regarding the building of the structure on the property.

Russo said the building was assessed at the value of \$1,000 in 1948, and \$500- each of the following years until it finally disappeared during the tax year of 1956.

Russo said he has plans to continue his research and that he may eventually submit a form B to Massachusetts Historical in the future.

Motion: Roach made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. Russo seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adjourning the meeting.