

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, April 11, 2017
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Thomas Melone, Susan Steele, Joseph Panto, David Russo, Donald Berg, Elise Loukas

Member(s) Absent: Marilyn K. Roach

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan C. Jenness (Adopted 5/10/17)

David J. Russo opened the meeting.

1. Invitation to Comment – Mass. Historical Commission review of Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Bigelow Chapel Addition and New Crematory Project Notification Form

Gus Fraser, Director of Preservation and Facilities Management of the Mt. Auburn Cemetery appeared to review the project with the HC as a follow up to their appearance in January.

Russo expressed his concern that the right material had not been chosen in Bigelow Chapel. He said he felt that the addition, in particular the materials did not appear as congruent with the building. Fraser explained that the cemetery wanted people outside to get a feel for the inside of the chapel and wanted those inside the chapel to feel part of the outside. The cemetery also wanted to make the roofline as simple as possible so as not to compete with the granite of the building.

The following comments were made while the commission discussed writing a response to Mass. Historic regarding their thoughts on the Bigelow Chapel renovation project at the Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

Steele said that the glass “porch” addition is light-filled and airy. It complements the historic structure, adding new liveliness and views of the existing stone façade from the surrounding landscape.

Loukas said she was impressed by all the work and planning involved and that it was refreshing to have people care as much as the HC does about what they are doing to a historic building.

Berg said he thought it was very hard to please everyone but he agreed with the comments made by Susan and Elise.

Melone said that the handicap access is a plus and makes the building so much more functional.

Russo said that while this Historical Commission stands behind the cemetery, and I agree that this proposal does a great job, I still disagree with a few of the elements. I find the glass and metal incongruent with the granite of the building, and also the chancellor window in the proposed form.

The clerk will coordinate with members of the HC to collect comments for input into a letter to be sent to Mass. Historic in the following week.

1) Meeting Minutes Review – March 9, 2017

After a brief discussion, the minutes from the March 9, 2017 HC meeting were adopted by unanimous vote.

2) 2017 Preservation Awards – Review of Nominations form due April 6, 2017

a. Awards Ceremony at Commander's Mansion – May 18, 2017

The following individuals and projects were chosen to receive the following awards at the 2017 Historical Preservation Awards.

Brittany Byrd and Brita Zitin
Watertown Free Public Library
Richard E. Mastrangelo Memorial Award

Butler and Sons Tree Service
Professional Tree Services at the Commanders Mansion
Environmental Presentation Award

Dan Hogan and Andrea Santopietro, Watertown Cable Access
Video Segments on Watertown History
Community Spirit Award

Meg Winslow, Mount Auburn Cemetery
Assistance with Mass. Historic Inventory Forms
Historical Resources Preservation Award

Carole Katz, Watertown Savings Bank
Historic Banners in Watertown & Coolidge Squares
Citizenship Award

The Conservation Office will continue to plan the event which will take place on May 18, 2017 at the Commanders Mansion on Talcott Ave.

3) New Business

- a. Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner explained the process of the transitioning the Historical Preservation function away from Hayward, the Preservation/Conservation Agent and Tree Warden to the Historical Preservation Coordination Team which is made up of staffing from the Planning Office. Hayward will still be involved in the Historical Preservation Coordination efforts. The team is made up of Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning, Andrea Adams, Senior Planner, Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner and Susan Jenness, Assistant to the Historical Preservation Coordination Team.
- b. Russo expressed interest in starting the process of setting up a time for a site visit at the Commanders Mansion with the Sub-Committee he made up of members of the HC and Historical Society. Jenness said that she would reach out to the Commanders Mansion to get that started. Russo clarified that the meeting would be strictly to go and view the items in the basement of the Commanders Mansion to discuss at a later meeting.
- c. St. James's has put in a bid on the Town's Library Building which was constructed around 1900-1925. They would need to come before the Historical Commission for a hearing under the Demolition Delay Ordinance if they sought to demolish the building.

Meeting adjourned.