



**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, September 12, 2019 Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room 7:00 p.m.

**Historical Commission Members Present:** Thomas Melone, Elise Loukas, Chair, Marilynne Roach, David Russo, Vice Chair, Mathew Walter, Susan Steele

**Member(s) Absent:** Joseph Panto

**Public Present:** Vincent McNutt, Mike French, Michael Mahoney

**Staff Present:** Gideon Schreiber, Susan C. Jenness

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**Loukas opened the meeting with the minutes.**

**1. Minutes-** From August 8, 2019 Historical Commission Meeting.

After a review of the minutes a motion was made to accept the minutes from the August 8, 2019 meeting.

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

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached accepting the minutes.

**2. Public Hearing- 101 No. Beacon St.** to consider the demolition permit application submitted for portions of 101 No. Beacon St. built in approximately 1911, including the garage and showroom. Michael French, Applicant/ 101 No. Beacon St., LLC, Owner

Vincent MacNutt of Seabrook Real Estate Partners represented the project at 101 N. Beacon St. He reported the results of his historical research on the building, concluding with the fact that the portion of the building, subject of this hearing was built in 1965 and 54 years old.

The Historical Commission members had no questions after the review.

There were no public comments.

### **Commission Discussion**

Melone said he did not see the building as being distinctive or contributing to the history or architectural heritage of the Town.

Steele agreed with Melone.

Roach said the building was nothing to write home about.

Walter said he saw nothing to preserve.

**Motion:** Melone made a motion that the building at 101 No. Beacon St. was not preferably preserved. Walter seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached that the building at 101 No. Beacon St. was not preferably preserved.

### **3. Discussion- Demolition Delay Ordinance**

Russo passed out two photo copies of the Demolition Delay Ordinance, one in use by the Town, and one of the Model Ordinance which has been the subject of his ongoing email conversation with Christopher Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs for Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Members of the commission discussed a variety of aspects of Watertown's local ordinance and how it could be improved and made easier to use for the members of the Historical Commission. Russo explained that he had been working with the ordinance for 20 years and experiencing difficulty with it in its current form for some time.

Loukas discussed whether it would be helpful to have a screening process that took place by town staff before the properties were put on an agenda for a public hearing. Steele said she felt it was the responsibility for the HC to be involved in every request that was made to demolish a structure in the Town that was over 50 years of age.

Melone shared he was concerned with the definition of demolition and how it was to be applied in cases of partial demolition reviews.

Steele said she had copies of surrounding Town's definition of demolition.

Magoon remarked that the biggest concern the HC had about the Demolition Delay Ordinance in the past was the actual length of a delay. He said more recently the concern for them seemed to center around defining demolition and how that definition applied to projects

that involved partial demolition to a structure. The conversation was continued to the October meeting.

#### **4. Community Preservation Act Committee (CPA) Update**

Steele who is the member of the CPA Committee selected for Historical Preservation delivered an update to the members of the HC.

She reported that members of the CPAC will be holding interviews for 2 consultants who are currently being considered. She said they both have a lot of the experience that would help the committee avoid the pitfalls other communities have faced, and help them to move more quickly with engaging with the community, and moving forward.

Steele mentioned that in 2015 she and Russo had worked together on a Historic Preservation Plan for the Town. She said she felt it was time to focus on an updated plan that would help guide the Town into the future over the next several years.

#### **5. Magoon responded to a request made by Loukas for an update on 74 Fitchburg St.**

He explained that the attorney for the owner has asked if they could apply for the next month's agenda to present a proposal to the board for a determination of restoration of 74 Fitchburg St. Magoon explained that this would get the owner out from the 2 year delay and offer a solution to the halted construction site.

Members of the Historical Commission informed Magoon they were open to holding a public hearing the following month to hear the owner's proposal and make a determination if the proposal constituted restoration. Magoon said he would reach out to the attorney for 74 Fitchburg St. the following day.

Russo and Walter discussed that Mt. Auburn Cemetery is selling a parking lot that has been rented to Mt. Auburn Hospital where an 1850's building known as the Shick House is located. Russo reported that where the cemetery now plans to sell the property, the Shick house is in now in some peril.

Russo explained that The Historical Commission may be holding a public hearing to hear the proposed plans for the site in the near future, and that he has a report on the Shick House available.

Loukas informed the board that Steve Magoon was interviewed on NPR during the week when he was asked to comment on the reason why no turn on red was enforced at some intersections in the town. Magoon said he was asked to comment on the subject when a resident called in to NPR asking for an explanation of why it was important for drivers to refrain from turning red at some intersections in the town. Loukas made reference Magoon joining celebratory status along with Marilynne Roach, who is a member of the commission

and a celebrated author on the subject of the Salem Witch Trials. Roach has also been interviewed as an expert on both radio and television.

Loukas congratulated Russo on his speaking engagement at the Watertown Historical Society event on Charles Brigham the previous evening. The event was titled *Going Places: Charles Brigham's Architecture of Travel*. Russo gave his lecture and a slideshow on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 7:00 PM Watertown Savings Bank Meeting Room at the Watertown Free Public Library.

**Motion:** At 8:00 PM Russo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roach seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the meeting.