

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, May 13, 2017
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

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

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Andrea Adams, Susan C. Jenness

David J. Russo opened the meeting and explained the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission and the process that would be followed.

- 1) **Public Hearing – 76 Emerson St.** – a formerly existing one family cape style home built around 1934 that was demolished without a permit. Proposed is a single family house. Connor Maguire and Krista Muzzioli, Applicants/Owner

No representative appeared for the public hearing on 76 Emerson St. Instead, a letter that was received in the Historical Preservation Office was read into the record by Russo.

The letter written by counsel for the applicants and owners of the home were involved in an unavoidable scheduling conflict which called them away from attending the public hearing that evening.

The letter sought a continuance of the hearing until the June 8, 2017 Historical Commission meeting.

Russo explained that anyone attending the meeting that night was welcome to come back and participate in the hearing on June 8th, or would be allowed opportunities to write about their concerns and submit them to the Conservation and Historical Preservation Office before the hearing on June 8, 2017.

- 2) **Public Hearing – 88 Loomis Ave.** - a one family cape style building built in around 1950 having a vinyl exterior and asphalt shingle roof. Proposed is a two family house. Michael J. Quinn, Applicant Savas Pratsinacis, Owner

Michael Quinn appeared to present for 88 Loomis Ave. He began by thanking the HC for their time and introducing a map of the area surrounding the home. The map showed a fire station across the street from the home, an apartment building, an abandoned gas station, and some commercial structures to the right and behind.

Photographs were passed around of 8 surrounding abutters, and also submitted into the file for public viewing as well.

Russo inquired of Quinn what he was able to learn about the history of the building. Quinn was able to find no history he perceived as relevant.

Melone commented that parking was not a consideration during a review for demolition delay before the Historical Commission although there appeared only on street parking for the new structure. Melone further stated that the proposed structure was very similar in style to the surrounding homes.

Steele asked him to explain materials and Quinn stated there would be vinyl siding that would give the appearance of being a shingle from the façade of the house. Steele asked if he considered Hardy Board. Quinn said that the shingled appearance of the vinyl siding would hold up well and look nice as well as easy to maintain over a long period of time.

A public hearing was opened and no one commented.

Berg asked if the proposed structure conformed to the zoning regulations.

Adams consulted Zoning Guidelines and confirmed that the proposed structure would conform.

After discussion a motion was made by the HC.

Motion: Berg made a motion that the structure at 88 Loomis Ave. was not preferably preserved. Loukas seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the existing building at 88 Loomis Ave. was not preferably preserved.

- 3) Public Hearing – 188 Summer St.** – demolition of existing 3 family building with detached garage built in approximately 1875. Proposed is a new two family townhouse. Christopher Attardo, Applicant Gilbert Ruggeri, Owner

Christopher Attardo appeared to present the proposed project to the HC which involves demolishing the current structure and to build 2 new condominiums. He described the existing structure as very run down. He also said that the current owner is interested in relocating to Florida.

The foot print of the current property, including the garage encroaches on the abutting neighbor's property. Attardo explained that if allowed to go forward, this project would correct that issue.

The materials being proposed for the building are Aztec Trim and vinyl siding.

Russo inquired if Attardo would be open to retaining the front of the building and maintaining the three family status which is so rare today in Watertown.

Attardo responded that the foundation is fieldstone and would not sustain the weight of building on top of the existing foundation. Further he state that the proposed structure would need modifications to meet zoning requirements and to correct the encroachment onto the abutting neighbor's property lines.

Russo explained to Attardo and the members of the public that this building was established in 1874 and that it used to be a store. He explained that he was asking that they consider keeping the main structure intact, because once a three family is given up in Watertown, it is gone forever. He summarized that Watertown is facing the loss of a very rare three family home here that will never come back.

Adams explained that if you tear down the structure what must be put it in its place, would need to be in compliance with what is allowed in that zone. She also confirmed that if the three family is demolished the three family status will change to what is allowed in the zone now.

Melone explained that if the front of the building were saved, there could be room for one unit on the first floor, room for one attached addition, and one unit on the 2nd floor totaling three units.

Panto stated that he felt a need to question the role of the HC. He said he wanted to know where the line should be drawn between saving a historical property and trying to convince someone to save a building because we think a 3 family should be saved.

Loukas asked if the other HC members wanted to preserve the house 1st and think about alternatives later. She clarified that currently they were asking the applicant to add on to a building that had clearly been added on to. She summarized that this situation suggests that we need to think about what the possibilities are when a 3 family comes in for a demolition on the basis that once a 3 family is gone, it is gone.

Russo said that the massing was still in existence. He reviewed some historical details. The original owner was Patrick Gleason. He lived there with his wife in the late 1800's. He passed away but his wife stayed for a very long time after he was deceased. Russo explained that this was an original workers cottage.

Steele said she liked the massing and the porch which showed no special details.

Panto pointed out that the neighborhood has begun trending in a different direction.

Melone said that there are other homes on this street much more worthy of us trying to save.

Panto said that he was very happy that there would be more grass and open space if the demolition takes place and the new proposed structure is approved to go up in its place.

Loukas said that although Russo is partial to the massing, there is no true character here to save.

After discussion, a motion was made by the HC.

Motion: Melone made a motion that the building at 188 Summer St. was not preferably preserved. Steele seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house at 188 Summer St. was not preferably preserved.

4) Meeting Minutes Review – April 13, 2017

After a brief discussion a motion was made on the minutes from April 13, 2017.

Motion: Berg made a motion to adopt the minutes of April 13, 2017 with minor modification. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote took place adopting the minutes from the April 13, 2017 minutes.

5) 2017 Preservation Awards –

Awards Ceremony at Commander's Mansion – May 18, 2017, 7pm
Photographs needed for awards presentation.

A brief discussion took place on preparation for the 2017 Historical Preservation Awards. Jenness gave a status report on each aspect of the planning.

She requested assistance in preparing the special recognition awards certificates as she was having difficulty keeping this a secret from Hayward from within the office.

Panto volunteered to assist Jenness preparing the special recognition awards for J. B. Jones and Chris Hayward in order that they remain a surprise for Hayward.

Jenness informed the HC that the mansion should be opened by 6:00 PM and that she would arrive close to that time.

Russo agreed he would meet Jenness in the front parlor to sign the awards and get them back into their respective frames in time to start the ceremony.

Joyce Kelley of the Historical Society volunteered to bring back so photographs of historical nature that could be used in the Historical Preservation Awards. She will bring them by the Conservation/Historical Preservation Office on Friday.

6) New Business

- a. Russo spoke about some references he had learned of about some homes that were located in the City of Newton and that had been built by Charles Brigham and Alberto Haynes.

He had also learned of a home that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places with no architect listed on the Form B. This house is located in Waltham and Russo believes it was built by Alberto Haynes.

Russo plans to write letters to the appropriate parties notifying them of his findings and will send copies of the letters to the Office of Conservation and Preservation to be kept on record.

- b. Loukas announced that the Loukas Family and the Historical Society would be giving out the Victor N. Loukas Memorial Scholarships on May 30th, the Tuesday after Memorial Day at the Edmund Fowle House at 28 Marshall St.

Motion: Berg made a motion to close the meeting. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to close the Historical Commission Meeting.