



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

Elise Loukas, Chairperson
Thomas Melone, Member
Susan Steele, Member
Marilynne K., Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member
Richard Glenn, Member
Edward G. McCourt

Minutes: Thursday, February 9, 2023, Remote Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: Elise Loukas, Susan Steele, Marilynne Roache, Richard Glenn, Joseph Panto, Ed McCourt

Member(s) Absent: Matthew Walter

Public Present: Thomas Melone, Scott Miller

Staff Present: Larry Field, Senior Planner, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

1. Acceptance of Minutes- Review and acceptance of minutes from the January 12, 2023, meeting.

Members of the commission reviewed the minutes from the January meeting and a motion was made.

Motion: McCourt made a motion to accept the minutes as written, and Glenn seconded .

Roll Call: A roll call was taken, and the minutes were accepted unanimously as written.

2. Public Hearing- To determine if the structures at 50 Columbia St. (Watertown High School) are preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. City of Watertown, Owners/James S. Jordan- B Architects, LLC Applicant.

Loukas explained that the applicants had asked to continue this public hearing to March due to an illness on their team.

3. **Public Hearing-** To determine if the house and accessory structures at 33 Hovey St. are preferably preserved and if a demolition delay will be imposed. 33 Hovey St., LLC, Owner/Scott Miller, Applicant

Scott Miller was present to review the project with the members of the HC. He described the house on the site as 2-bedroom single family house about 952 square feet. The condition was described as very poor, dilapidated, with little to no green space with a shed an old shed on the site. The house is in the T-Zone.

Proposed are 2 town houses about 1800 square feet, in a style that is in harmony with the other structures on the street. The exterior will be sided in a high-quality fibre product, with high quality windows, and window seats for style.

Historical Commission Questions

Roach inquired about the inside of the house and Miller said it would require a full gutting. He also added the siding is aluminum, also in very bad condition. He said the grounds around the house are in very bad condition too. Walter had no questions. Panto asked if there would be any additional greenspace in the new design. Miller stated there would be greenspace on either side of the structures. McCourt inquired about the accessory structure. Miller said it is just a shed. McCourt also asked about the prominent tree and said he hoped it would be saved. Miller said they planned to keep it. Glenn had no questions.

Public Comments

Daniel Baruch from 62 Lowell Ave. asked when the house would be demolished. He said the pool was installed in 1973, and the house is not habitable.

A letter was read into the record from Rosalie Savignano of 37 Hovey St. She had several comments and requests. The letter stated that she hopes the house stays because it relates to the historic value of the city. She is concerned if the demo is allowed to move forward, she would want to know about pest control and asbestos removal. She asked for a good chain link fence around the construction site with a solid tarp over it to protect her property. She asked if the builder would consider a patio versus a deck, and if it would be occupied by the owner. Savignano is the 93-year-old direct abutter, and would like to meet with the contractor to discuss her concerns in close proximity to the project.

Commission Discussion

A brief discussion was held among members of the HC. McCourt agreed with Miller's comments about the condition of the existing structures. Steele had no opposition to the application. Walter saw no historical significance of the structures. Roach said it was a shame to lose another old house. Glenn said he was not inclined to preserve it. Loukas said she agreed with most comments that had been made.

Motion: Walter made a motion that the house and shed at 33 Hovey St. are not preferably preserved. Panto seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken, and all agreed with the motion made by Walter.

4. **Agent Report-** Field reported that the Demolition Delay and Regulations proposed modifications were currently being reviewed by K & P Law, and once they are finished with their review, the next step is the proposed modifications go back to City Council. He expects this to take place in March.

Field reported the MHC Application for a \$20,000.00 grant for funds to survey the South Side of Watertown was filed by the deadline. News about the status of the grant award is expected by March 9th. With respect to completing some of the Form Bs begun by David Russo, Field and Loukas have spoken to some qualified historians who are unable to accept this work at this time. Field and Loukas will pursue this further if the city does not receive the MHC grant. .

Field reported that the draft Comprehensive Plan will be the subject of a public meeting on March 9. The consultant, which is Stantec, will post the draft online for public review. The meeting will take place at the Watertown Free Public Library and conflicts with the upcoming Historical Commission meeting. Stantec will revise the draft Comprehensive Plan based on feedback, and submit the plan to City Council.

5. **Commission Discussion- Historic Preservation Awards** - Jenness agreed to update the Historic Preservations Awards nominations packets with the combined version of all the nomination categories and send the new packet out to HC members. She will also contact the Commanders Mansion and ask to book the ceremony on the grounds outdoors, for the evening of May 18, 2023.
6. **CPC Updates by Matthew Walter-** Walter reported that there will be a special meeting in February to review the project applications that are moving forward. The Fowle House has two applications for projects; one for installation of a gutter system, and one for installation of an internal climate control system to protect the interior of the house, and the objects inside the house with optimal temperature and moisture conditions. The Commanders Mansion has a project application to hire consultants to survey the external portion of the building and the landscape, to determine the historical and architectural periods and determine the needs to maintain the grounds in the future.
7. **New Business-** Thomas Melone was called on by Loukas. Loukas announced she had not been made aware that Melone had decided not to renew his seat on the Historical Commission when his last term expired in the fall. She said she only recently learned that McCourt had been appointed to take the spot vacate by Melone.

Loukas said she asked Melone to attend this meeting, so that everyone could have a chance to honor his service to the Historical Commission over the last decade and a half. Loukas said she always welcomed Melone's contributions to the public hearing process and that she was going to miss his contributions and his personal presence. Loukas recalled the times Melone went out to visit application sites prior to each public hearing, and that many times he took photos that would be shared with his colleagues in the public process. Members agreed his contributions as a member of the HC and as a colleague would be missed and remembered always. Melone was thanked and best wishes were extended in his well-deserved retirement from service to the Historical Commission.

Motion: McCourt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Glenn seconded the motion. Members were polled and all agreed to adjourn.