



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

Elise Loukas, Chair
Susan Steele, Member
Marilynne K. Roach, Member
Joseph Panto, Member
Matthew Walter, Member
Richard Glenn, Member
Edward G. McCourt, Member

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

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

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Public Present:

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

Loukas opened the meeting as Chair.

1. **Acceptance of Minutes-** Minutes from the October 12, 2023, meeting.

Members briefly discussed the minutes from the October 12, 2023, meeting and there were no issues or updates requested.

Motion: Roach made a motion to accept the minutes as written from the October 12, 2023, meeting. Glenn seconded the motion made by Roach.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken and the minutes from October 12, 2023, meeting were unanimously accepted as written.

2. **Commission Discussion** - Training/Education- relating to the Demolition Delay Ordinance.

Field led the discussion regarding the potential for training and education as it relates to the Demolition Delay Ordinance. Field clarified there were two parts of the discussion he aimed to have during the meeting.

- Exploration of ways to support members in their work deciding on applications that appear before the Historical Commission.
- Exploration of ways to provide education about the demolition delay ordinance for realtors, owners, potential buyers, as well as members of the general public.

For the first part, Field explained he could investigate inviting an expert in evaluating historic structures and the feasibility of preservation to attend a meeting and provide instruction to members. He noted that while several members of the Commission have a background that helps them evaluate whether it is infeasible to preserve/rehabilitate a building, having more information can strengthen the Commission's work.

For the second part, Field introduced the idea of creating distributable materials such as a brochure for those who should know more about how the demolition delay ordinance works. Field suggested they could brainstorm about the form of material they could develop and the various ways they could offer the material to members of the public.

Loukas said they should first discuss whether a pamphlet is a good idea at this time. Panto suggested looking at the frequency of how many people contact the office for assistance in filing a demolition application. He suggested it would be prudent to include a checklist in the materials, to instruct applicants what information is needed to complete a demolition delay application package. Walter suggested the material should have graphics and attractive pictures. Steele said she has access to materials to increase awareness about the history and architectural value of Watertown. Glenn suggested the use of very basic, easy to comprehend language to lend clarity to the process.

Field stated that Liz Helfer the Cultural Planner for the City is very talented with graphics. McCourt said he was looking forward to seeing what Steele had to offer for materials regarding the history of the city.

Loukas and Field will discuss how to develop these ideas in the coming months.

3. **CPC Update-** Walter did not have any updates. Steele mentioned a recent article she came across introducing a tricky issue regarding a church who received CPC funding. A portion of the funding was used to cover the cost of repairs to the church stain glass windows that contained religious iconography. The court ruled it was problematic to use CPC funds in the way they were used in this case. Walter and Steele explained that use of the funds should only be spent for items and repairs that would benefit everyone in the public, otherwise it could be crossing a constitutional line.

4. **Agent Report**

Field reported that the consultant who had agreed to the contract for surveying the South Side of Watertown is no longer available due to timing issues. He reported that the Massachusetts Historical Commission had been truly supportive and will work with the Historical Commission on re-issuing the Request for Qualifications and extending the grant contract.

Field reported there would be a Watertown Square Design Charrette over three days at the end of November. Field described the exercises as an intensive pressure cooker where the design team generates ideas from the public and develops them into alternative concept plans. Field said public comment will also be invited through an online survey and kitchen table conversations prior to the charrette.

Motion: McCourt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Steele seconded the motion.

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