

**Newburyport Historical Commission**  
City Hall Conference Room  
October 26, 2016  
Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Sarah White called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

In attendance were members Sarah White, Malcolm Carnwath, Stephen Dodge and Mark Bilodeau. Ned McGrath was absent. Building Inspector James Bone was also in attendance.

**3. Demolition Applications**

**GEM Realty** ☐

79 Parker Street ☐

Full Demolition of Farmhouse and Barn

The owner intends to sell the property and wishes to demolish the barn and farmhouse to make it attractive to potential buyers. Sarah White explained the process to the applicant.

Stephen Dodge moved the house and barn are historically significant. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. A public hearing will be scheduled for the November 9 meeting.

**4. Advisory Review**

**Harris Street Six Realty Trust, Mark L. Janos, Trustee**

6 Harris Street

DOD Special Permit

Mark Janos was in the process of replacing a rotted column on the front façade of the structure when the Building Inspector informed him the column is historically significant. Mr. Janos subsequently consulted with Linda Miller and Tom Kolterjahn. He intends to replicate the column that had existed and restore the remaining one. No contractor has yet confirmed a replication of the column would be possible. It appears beading was applied to the column rather than it being carved. If it proves not to be possible to replicate the column, the restoration of the remaining column would not be of value. Instead, two new columns would be added that would be appropriate to the structure. Sarah White recommended that the remaining column then be salvaged for educational purposes.

Mr. Janos also plans to restore and enclose the vestibule. New tile would be installed on the floor and granite would be added that is consistent with the foundation. The enclosure would be of wood. The columns had been used as corners of the vestibule. The Commission members requested the vestibule be reconstructed in such a way as to allow the exposure of the columns. The Moses Brown House at 1 Fruit Street was cited as example of the way in which the vestibule should be treated.

Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, co-president of Newburyport Preservation Trust, said the entrance on the structure is one of the finest in Newburyport and it is important to do the best job possible with its restoration. He said it is critical the vestibule does not interfere with the pilasters on either side of the door or the two front columns. The work should replicate that

Newburyport Historical Commission  
October 26, 2016

which was shown in the *Architectural History of the Merrimack*. Planning Board approval is needed for the work.

Sarah White moved to recommend to the Planning Board the applicant be allowed to rebuild the vestibule within the parameters discussed. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Sarah White moved the applicant should return to the Commission to further evaluate the replication and restoration of the columns after he has meet with contractors. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **5. General Business**

### **Lisa Mead for Diane and Greg Chorebanian**

55 Washington Street□

#### **Preservation Restriction**

The property owners wish to add a small residential unit to the rear of the property in the place of a cement block shed. This action would require a 6(C) special permit from the Planning Board. As a part of this special permit the applicants must provide a public benefit to the city. They are proposing this benefit take the form of a preservation restriction on the main structure. The structure was built between 1912 and 1920 and is listed as contributing to the National Register District. No work is planned for the structure at this time, but the preservation restriction would give the Historical Commission purview over changes made to the exterior of the house in the future. The restriction would require that cedar siding be used when the vinyl is replaced and any replacement windows be in keeping with the period of the house.

A discussion took place on the value of preservation restrictions. Mark Bilodeau said the house is in fairly good condition and all of its historic features have been removed. The restriction would not benefit the city because changes to the structure are not likely to be seen anytime soon and the neighborhood would be damaged by the infill. Tom Kolterjahn asked if preservationists are abetting infill and the ruination of neighborhoods by supporting preservation restrictions. He added the City does not do a good job of tracking or enforcing preservation restrictions. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the house is not in danger of demolition due to DCOD. She said the resulting infill would hurt the neighborhood and preservation restrictions are only valuable when enforced and when a visible public benefit results. Lisa Mead suggested the NHC create a regulation requiring property owners who receive a preservation to restriction contribute to a fund to support their tracking. She added preservation restrictions pose a risk to property owners because they shrink the market for sellers and lenders.

In a three to one straw vote the members decided to support the preservation restriction. The details of the restriction will be discussed further at the November 9 meeting.

## **6. Minutes**

The approval of the minutes of the September 28 meeting was tabled.

## **7. Correspondence**

MHC announced its 2017 matching grant program for surveys and planning.

## **8. Adjournment**

Sarah White moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.