

Newburyport Historical Commission
Minutes of the May 6, 2010 Meeting

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Linda Smiley at 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Linda Smiley, Tom Kolterjahn, Ned McGrath, Leah McGavern, Stephen Feige and Margaret Welch.

3. 4. Guests

14 Beck Street

David Polando asked about placing a preservation restriction on his property, which he would like to sell with the assurance that would be protected. He asked if there is a system in place for annual inspections. There currently is not, but one could be devised. Mr. Polando would probably have to pay the city solicitor to review the restriction. Restrictions held by the City are generally in place for 30 years but those held by MHC are permanent. Margaret Welch urged Mr. Polando to obtain a permanent restriction. Linda Smiley said she NHC would be delighted to hold and monitor the restriction.

4. Advisory Review

223 High Street

The Planning Board has asked if there is a public benefit to placing a preservation restriction on the house. The owner is proposing to donate land to the Nock Middle School and place a preservation restriction on the house in order to obtain Planning Board approval for a proposal. Tom Kolterjahn said the proposed restriction is too loose. While a preservation restriction might be desirable, the Commission did not think it could make a decision without more information. A site visit will take place on Saturday, May 15 at 9:00 a.m.

33 Market Street

Blake Wilcox

Mr. Wilcox asked that the demolition delay on his property be lifted. He said the main chimney in the house has been leaking and there is mold in the attic. In addition, water is coming in behind the clapboards and some wood has rotted. Ned McGrath said the delay does not prevent him from being able to repair the chimney or address the mold problem. Raising the roof would not solve these problems. Linda Smiley said that not only do the members of the Commission firmly believe in their decision, but lifting the delay would also set a bad precedent. It could lead a homeowner to damage a property, believing this would be a means to lifting a delay. Mr. Wilcox is able to work on the clapboards, sheathing, chimney and mold while the delay is in effect. Repairs that would be made now could be incorporated into the final plans.

Whittier Bridge

Mayor Holaday said the City has been working with the towns of Amesbury and Salisbury to identify mitigation measures for the bridge construction. She said it would be beneficial for the bridge to be identified as being historically significance. The designation would help prevent Mass. Highway from avoiding an environmental impact study. The designation would also allow the NHC to have a role in the selection of the design of the bridge. Nick Cracknell said the documents would to changed to indicate that Moseley Pines rather than Maudslay State Park is the impacted space. Stephen Feige said the bridge does not meet the 75-year requirement for being historically significant. Linda Smiley said most communities, along with the federal government, use 50 years as a requirement. Margaret Welch said the bridge is a public structure and monument constructed to honor a local person. Linda Smiley moved to designate the bridge as historically significant with the findings as amended. Leah McGavern seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. CPA

Custom House Maritime Museum

Mark Guay gave an overview of the recent progress made by the Maritime Society and summarized its goals. The Society is applying for CPA funding for a feasibility study to look at HVAC issues and accessibility and to determine if an addition to the Custom House is warranted. Tom Kolterjahn asked if the Maritime society should contemplate an addition when the existing building has significant problems. Linda Smiley said the Custom House is an important part of the City's history. She moved to write a letter of support for the use of CPA money to help accomplish the Society's goals. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Arrowhead Farm CPA Application

Members of the Commission visited the site. Linda Smiley said that while there would be a public benefit to having a preservation restriction on the property, there would not necessarily be a public benefit to having it funded by the CPA because it is a private business venture. A letter will be sent to the CPC stating that the NHC would be willing to hold the preservation restriction if asked but will not comment on the CPA application.

6. Minutes

Tom Kolterjahn moved to approve the minutes of February 4. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Stephen Feige moved to approve the minutes of April 15. Margaret Welch seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.