

## Newburyport Historical Commission

### Draft Minutes of the 16 August 2012 Meeting

#### **1. Call to Order**

The regularly scheduled meeting the Newburyport Historical Commission was called to order at 7:40 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall. Present: Steve Dodge, Tom Kolterjahn, Ned McGrath, Linda Smiley, Bill Todd, and Margaret Welch.

#### **2. Demolition Applications**

*30 Munroe Street (Preston Carey, applicant)* – Mr. Carey presented his plans to take down a back porch built after the original building's ca. 1850 date. NHC members accepted the demolition plans as presented and released the porch for demolition (6 yes).

#### **3. Review of Minutes**

The minutes of 2 August were approved with emendations (5 yes, 1 abstention). In the review of the minutes, NHC member Kolterjahn said that he would doublecheck with the owner of 251 Merrimac Street re: replication lites on the Oakland Street door.

Chair Smiley suspended the public meeting.

#### **4. Public Hearing for 55 ½ - 57 Bromfield Street**

At 7.45 Chair Smiley opened the public hearing.

Mr. Tom Piekarski of Concordia Homes presented his plans to demolish the structure and replace it with a two-family house. He noted that NHC members had made a site visit. The plans for the replacement structure were dated 3 August 2012. Members discussed with Mr. Piekarski their concerns that the new structure would “overpower” the neighborhood. The current building is 28 feet high; the replacement building is 33 feet high. Mr. Piekarski said the the house behind was 35 feet and the one across was 33 feet high.

No one spoke in favor of the demolition.

No one spoke in opposition of the demolition.

William Harris of 56 Lime Street spoke of his concern with the process. He said that it had been 51 days since the ZBA granted a special permit and was concerned that the ZBA was not receiving NHC expertise in a timely manner.

Mrs. Lyndi Lanphear, 347 High Street, inquired what group Mr. Harris was representing. Mr. Harris replied that he worked with many people.

Chair Smiley closed the public hearing at 8:01.

She resumed the public meeting at 8:02.

### **5. Demolition Applications (cont.)**

*55 ½ - 57 Bromfield Street (Concordia Homes, applicant)* – NHC member Kolterjahn said that the condition of the house was “deplorable” and that he could not resolve how to restore it. He reiterated his concern about the height of the replacement structure. He said that the replacement structure, being a gambrel shape, should be shorter than the federal-era buildings nearby. Mr. Piekarski said he thought that it would fit in. He agreed with Mr. Kolterjahn that the replacement structure he had built on Hancock Street was too tall.

Chair Smiley agreed that the building was in tough shape. She asked about the possibility of dropping the replacement structure by one foot, noting that the proposed floor was 8 feet, 6 inches. He said that he would consult his architect. He will save the mantelpieces and might sell the beams. Mrs. Lanphear inquired whether the NHC was telling Mr. Piekarski how to deal with interiors; Chair Smiley noted that the NHC could not make the owner save interior features. Member Kolterjahn said that he would appreciate flexibility about the height.

The NHC voted to release the building, noting that the builder would lower the proposed building height by one foot (6 yes).

Chair Smiley suspended the public meeting at 8:10.

Chair Smiley opened the public hearing for 23 Oak Street at 8:11.

### **6. Public Hearing for 23 Oak Street**

*23 Oak Street (George Haseltine, applicant)* -- Attorney Lisa Mead presented the application for Mr. Haseltine. She noted that project architect Chris Crump noted in his 27 June letter that the house lacked “distinctive features” and had been modified over time. Five letters of support from Oak Street neighbors were presented. Chair Smiley requested that the building be designated not historically significant or that the building be released for demolition.

Chair Smiley asked whether anyone wished to speak in favor of the demolition. Simon Panall, 21 Oak Street, spoke in favor. He said that the building had been chopped up and that the replacement cape-style house would fit into the neighborhood. Elizabeth Valerinari, 29 Oak Street, said that the house belonged to her uncle and aunt. Although it held happy memories for her, it would not be a great loss and that the replacement structure would fit into the other capes. Mike Webber, representing his aunt, spoke about the addition added after they purchased the house in 1956.

No one spoke in opposition to the demolition.

Chair Smiley closed the public hearing at 8:17. She resumed the public meeting.

#### **7. Demolition Applications (cont.)**

NHC member Kolterjahn said that after seeing the house in its setting he believed it was not an historic asset. The NHC rescinded the determination of historic significance, thus releasing the house for demolition (6 yes).

#### **8. Old Business**

Architect Aileen Graf provided an update on the 51 High Street barn. The owners will retain the barn and move it 180 degrees. It will receive a new foundation (the windows will remain). The NHC moved to approve the plans as presented (6 yes).

NHC member Kolterjahn provided an update on the Powder House. Electrical services had been donated and draining installed. He discussed plans to provide handicapped access, suggesting a curving permanent granite ramp with a temporary aluminum ramp. The opening will be celebrated 20 September, and the Powder House will participate in Trails and Sails.

#### **9. Correspondence Received**

The NHC had received that final archaeological report re: the wastewater project. It was suggested that it be posted on the City's website.

*Meeting adjourned 8:40.*