

Fruit Street Local Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2015
City Hall 2nd Floor Small Conference Room

Meeting of the Fruit Street Local Historic District Commission was called to order at 7:07 PM.

Roll Call

Present: Leslie Eckholdt, Marian Levy, Bonnie Sontag, Maurice Southworth, Kevin Wallace

General Business

Approval of Minutes

Maurice Southworth made a motion to adopt the minutes of the November 14, 2013 meeting.

Bonnie Sontag seconded the motion.

Maurice and Bonnie voted to adopt. Kevin abstained. No other members were eligible to vote.

Correspondence

None

Old Business

None

New Business

2 Fruit St: application for windows repair and addition.

The owners, Joyce Enderle and Toivo Koehler, request a certificate of appropriateness for plans they have to repair winter ice and water damage to a rear section of their home. They are thinking about enlarging this section with an addition to the kitchen rather than simply repairing the section around the windows and the windows themselves. The addition would measure 6'10" X 11' and would be slightly visible from the street. It is for this latter reason that Maurice asked them to come to discuss their ideas with the commission and request the certificate.

Maurice explained that we would discuss all of their potential plans and decide together what makes sense for them to do in terms of following the procedure and abiding by the regulations. He provided a summary of the regulation and procedure as it relates to their two ideas.

A member reiterated that it would be fine for them to simply repair the windows and replace them with windows that would be more appropriate to the period of the house.

The applicants said that they have to do something to repair the damage to the structure and windows. They are not sure yet if they will actually go forward with the addition.

The commission is only concerned with that part of the structure that would be visible from the street. A member asked if the roof-line of the addition would stick out and be visible.

The applicants said they did not think so, or at least that was not the intention unless it would be necessary to ensure that water drains away from the structure. The member was clear that a visible protrusion would not be in keeping with the profile of the existing structure. The applicants reviewed the conceptual illustrations and drawings with the commission. There is a potential 6" over-hang. One member suggested that they try to get the roof to end flush with the wall and only the gutter would be visible from the street. The applicants noted that a box surrounds the gutter down-spout on the main house and would provide a visual barrier to any over-hang.

The existing kitchen ceiling is low, which means new windows could not exactly match the shape and size of the existing windows. The applicants intend to place muntins on any windows that they install, so as to simulate the look of Federal period windows. They want to be able to enjoy the view into their garden that they now have, which means windows to the floor. One idea is to install long, thin fixed windows rather than sliding doors, which they don't need on that side. A member noted that this idea is perfectly appropriate and lauded the applicants for choosing to work with Dodge brothers who are experienced historic preservation architects and will be able to offer options for how to create Federal period simulated window treatments.

The commission discussed with the applicant what alternatives were available to them in terms of a decision, given that they are not sure what they will do. The commission offered to approve a certificate of appropriateness with the condition that Maurice (the Chairperson) review final plans and if he has any concerns at all, he will call a meeting of the commission to discuss the plans with the applicants. Maurice encouraged the applicants to obtain more accurate plans, including materials to be used, and show that the finished project would look "Federally appropriate." If he agrees that the plans reflect the desires of the commission, he will sign the decision document and at that time the applicants will be able to apply for a building permit.

The applicants stated that they will replace shingles with clapboard in the back of the building.

The applicants confirmed that their home had experienced water damage and this provided the opportunity to consider creating an addition.

A member stated that other Federal period houses have additions that are not as appropriate as these owners are proposing to construct. In fact the owners wish they had done something like they are proposing now to extend the kitchen when they first renovated years ago.

A member explained that today we advocate maintaining or adding appropriately to the structure with the least amount of "pain" for the homeowner. Another member stated that the addition should "fit in" with the original structure, and it is fine to show that the addition is somewhat newer.

The applicants have considered how it would look to them while sitting in their garden. They are still considering if they will build the addition or not.

Maurice Southworth made a motion to approve a certificate of appropriateness with the condition that final plans be submitted and approved by him or reviewed by the entire commission before he signs the certificate.

Kevin Wallace seconded the motion. All voted in favor of granting the certificate of appropriateness with the condition.

Maurice offered to review the plans as soon as they become available. If he believes the commission as a whole should review the plans, we agreed to do so at the next regularly scheduled meeting or consider holding a special meeting if time is of the essence.

Other Business

Bonnie reported that Andy Port, the Planning Director, had asked her if combining the LHD Commission with the Newburyport Historical Commission seemed like a good idea. Conceptually she agreed with him, as did the then Chair of the NHC.

Members agree that it would cut down on bureaucracy, but wonder how it would work. If a Fruit St. LHD resident were added to the NHC, would s/he have to sit as regular member or serve as an alternate and only be required to review Fruit St. applications? Should such a change be discussed with Fruit St. homeowners or simply notify them? All agreed that only if this option is raised again for serious discussion would we involve homeowners.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Bonnie Sontag, Note Taker.