

Newburyport Historical Commission

Minutes of the 21 October 2010 Meeting

1. Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission (NHC) was called to order at 7:37 in the Council Chambers, City Hall. Present: Linda Smiley, Stephen Feige, Ned McGrath, Tom Kolterjahn, Leah McGavern, and Margaret Welch.

2. Old Business – Coombs Wharf

Pieter Harford, project manager for the sewer wastewater project gave an update. He was waiting for Dr. Mitch Mulholland to send a complete proposal for an archaeological assessment. The contractor had unearthed some stones while working on the cistern on the western side; NHC members Kolterjahn and Smiley did not think the stones related to the wharf but could be the foundations of a building.

Bill Harris of 56 Lime Street spoke about his discussion with the EPA's 106 compliance archaeological expert. Mr. Harris is compiling historic documentation for Dr. Mulholland. Mr. Harris discussed the recent "rediscovery" of the Revolutionary War-era Committee of Safety Records which involved William Coombs.

3. Demolition Applications

33 Tyng Street (Bradley and Katherine Bauer, applicants) The applicants and their contractor explained that in the 1950s a shed dormer had been placed on top of the building, creating structural instability. They wish to rebuild the roof, changing the pitch to more of a gambrel. The NHC voted the building historically significant (6 yes). The contractor said that the drawings were drawn up in haste; NHC members said an accurate set of drawings was important (the contractor apologized). The applicants intend to keep the eaves' details and the visible rafters. Members thought that the modifications would still fit into the streetscape and mentioned that the 1950s alterations had somewhat changed the original bungalow design. Member Feige was concerned that the proposed gambrel roof would greatly diminish the bungalow nature, saying that a hip roof traditionally was used for bungalows. The contractor wanted a steeper pitch to slough off snow. Chair Smiley said that she would prefer a shallower feel. The NHC voted to approve the application (5 yes, 1 no – Feige).

28 Hancock Street (Concordia Homes) – The applicant distributed a 19 October 2010 structural evaluation. He had previously examined only the rear of the house which the NHC had previously permitted to be demolished. He now wished to tear down the entire structure. Chair Smiley counseled him to make a new application. The NHC set up a site visit. NHC members advised the applicant, if a new building was allowed, that the new house should have the same massing and proportions.

4. Advisory Review

251 Merrimac Street (Brad Kutcher) – Mr. Kutcher intends to file a 6-C special permit for this property. He wished to convert the two-family house into a single-family house and build another house where the garage (to be torn down) now stands. He intends to take off the asbestos shingles and upgrade the chain link fence. Member Feige, looking at the drawing of the proposed house, said that the roof should be changed to eight pitch, in keeping with the Greek Revival look. He said that the new buildings in similar situations often overshadowed the original structures. A site visit was scheduled.

5. Review of Minutes

Minutes of 7 October approved.

6. New Business

Member McGavern said that she would resign from the NHC as her business as an architectural designer active in Newburyport posed a conflict. She said that recusing herself from individual cases would not suffice under the state ethics rules.

Meeting ended 9:15.