

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Hall Conference Room
December 9, 2015
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah White called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Sarah White, Stephen Dodge, Malcolm Carnwath and Mark Bilodeau. Ned McGrath was absent.

3. Demolition Applications

None

4. Advisory Review

**Geordie Vining, Office of Planning and Development
Harbormaster Facility Modifications, 27R Water Street**

Geordie Vining described the changes to the proposed Harbormaster's Facility and its associated utility corridor. The bids received were higher than the budget and the project has been redesigned. The footprint of the building has been made smaller, some materials have been changed and the size of the plaza has been reduced. The utility corridor was originally to have been located under Custom House Way. The cost of removing and replacing the brick to accomplish this proved to be prohibitive and New England Development was again contacted about allowing an easement for the utility corridor to the east of the Custom House. The company originally would not grant the easement because it did not wish to limit its flexibility with regard to future plans for the property. When approached again, New England Development agreed to grant an easement to the area within ten feet of the property line because this land could never be developed. The utility corridor would be located at the edge of the easement to be at the furthest point from the Custom House.

The Board of the Maritime Museum became concerned that the vibration from the installation of the utility corridor would damage the Custom House. There are existing cracks in the coins on the building's northwest corner and the mortar is cracked in the northeast corner. The Custom House is owned by the NRA and is leased to the Maritime Museum. The two entities jointly funded a title research of the area, which revealed public rights exist on the east side of the Custom House. While the public way does not cover the entire distance to the water, it does extend beyond the Custom House. The existence of this way would allow the utility corridor to be further removed from the Custom House. At the point the public way terminates, the corridor would shift to be within the 10-foot easement from New England Development.

Structural engineer John Wathne visited the site. He indicated to Mr. Vining that no damage would be done to the Custom House provided the work would be at least ten feet from the structure and no jack hammers or compactors would be used. To this end, the material used in the trench would be self-compacting and self-leveling. The conduit would be sleeved to order

Newburyport Historical Commission
December 9, 2015

that access for future maintenance be provided. Mr. Wathne will provide a written opinion on the project and his recommendations will be included in the plans and specifications.

Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, and Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, both supported the installation of the utility corridor to the east of the Custom House provided the work would take place at least 15 feet from the structure and the use of equipment would be managed to minimize vibrations. Mr. Harris said a vibration standard should be applied to all historic structures. Rob Germinara, 2 Ashland Street, asked the Commission to approve the plan with a .5 vibration standard. A brief discussion took place on other measures that might be taken to protect the building. The measures would be outside of the scope of this project.

At the August 11, 2015 meeting, the members of the Historical Commission voted the project would not have an adverse impact on historic or archaeological resources. The project would now be located outside of the central waterfront archaeological district and archaeological monitoring would not be required. The Activity and Use Limitation DEP imposed on the NRA property is not in effect in this location. The trenching would be done over the course of a few days and Mr. Vining would be on site to observe the work. He will rely on the opinion of consultants as to whether or not monitoring by a LSP would be needed.

Sarah White moved that a letter be constructed indicating the Historical Commission finds the project would create no adverse impacts on historic assets, specifically the Custom House, and recommends that the trenching take place at least ten feet from the structure, 15 feet where feasible, that vibration monitoring take place during the trenching and that any material of archeological substance found be remanded to experts for further examination. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Minutes

Mark Bilodeau moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting as submitted. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. General Business

Sarah White submitted the pre-application form to MHC for \$25,000 in funds to complete the inventory of buildings and outbuildings. If the Commission is asked to submit a full application, it will also apply for matching funds from the Community Preservation Committee.

The December 23 meeting will be cancelled.

7. Adjournment

Sarah White moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next regular meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 2016.