

Newburyport Historical Commission
Minutes of the February 18, 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. New Business

The members agreed to adopt a policy that the commission will seek approval from the mayor and city council for 30-year preservation restrictions. This will allow the city to provide legal assistance to the commission if needed.

4. Demolition Applications

5 Harbor Street

James Bourque appeared for the homeowner, who is proposing to remove a section of the roof of an existing structure and add a second story. The structure's footprint will remain the same and 420 square feet of living space will be added. The height of the structure will be increased by three feet. The house was constructed in 1920 and the addition dates from 1940. Linda Smiley moved the structure is historically significant. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Linda Smiley moved to approve the changes as proposed. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

14 Payson Street

The applicant is proposing to remove a 20-year old three-season porch from an 1891 house. A foundation will be installed on the existing footprint and a two-story addition constructed above it. The work will not extend above the existing roofline. Leah McGavern moved that the structure is historically significant. Linda Smiley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Tom Kolterjahn commented that the addition does not intrude upon or negatively impact the historic structure. Leah McGavern moved to release the porch for demolition. Linda Smiley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Advisory Review

33 Market Street

The owners had appeared previously before the commission with a plan to expand the structure by adding a third story. The reaction to the proposal was negative and a demolition delay was issued. Bob Gould appeared with the applicants, who are looking for acceptable alternatives to the original plan in order that the delay might be lifted. Mr. March presented three proposals that would lower the height of the third-story addition: a gambrel roof, a lower hip roof and a four-pitch gable roof. Linda Smiley said the structure is an intact one of a recognizable style. She said she appreciates the willingness of the applicants to work with the commission, but the house

is a beautiful one to which she would not like to see any changes. She cannot support any of the alternatives. Tom

Kolterjahn said all three of the alternatives would take away from what the structure is and make it into something it is not; the historic fabric would be lost. Stephen Feige said changing the roofline would not be appropriate. Ned McGrath said the commission should have input into the final plan, an opportunity that would be lost when the delay expires. Margaret Welch said there are other houses on the street of the same scale and the streetscape should be kept intact, but she would like to be able to reach a compromise. Leah McGavern said she does not find any of the proposals acceptable, although she would choose the gambrel roof if forced to make a choice between the three. Five of the six members present were not willing to endorse any of the three alternatives. The commission would like the applicants to look into adding on at the rear of the property.

Ahavas Achim Congregation

Jayne Underwood and Cheryl Blair spoke of their plans to apply for CPA funding. The roof on the structure needed to be repaired, which depleted the congregation's fund for improving the structure. The vinyl siding has been removed and work is being done to restore the clapboards. A handicap ramp and granite steps are being installed at the front of the synagogue. A second point of egress from the second floor must be added and there are plans to install a new concrete sidewalk. Margaret Welch said that no action from the commission would be required because, as a contributing structure in the National Register District, the synagogue is already eligible for CPA funding.

254 High Street

The public hearing has been continued to March 4. The applicant appeared before the commission at this meeting seeking an advisory review and comments made by the commission are unofficial. Building Commissioner Gary Calderwood has provided a written statement indicating six units are allowed on the property. The ZBA will be deciding at its next meeting if Mr. Calderwood has the authority to make this determination. Michael Staiti presented revised plans and said the many concerns of the abutters have been addressed. The massing has been further reduced, there is more separation between the sections of the building, and the proposed roofline is now lower than that of the original structure. The structure will read as three separate units and an entrance has been moved to Eagle Street. The applicant will preserve the exterior of the original house and has verbally agreed to retain an interior staircase. The commission will place conditions on the preservation of the house.

Inn Street

Linda Smiley said that a group is reportedly seeking CPA funds to make repairs to Inn Street and will be asking the commission to declare the street as historically significant. Margaret Welch said the street has played a role in the preservation of the city. The group will have the burden of convincing the commission of the importance of the street in the history of the city.

6. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 4 was deferred to March 4.

February 18, 2010

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.