

**Newburyport Historical Commission**  
City Council Chambers  
February 20, 2014  
Minutes

**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, Stephen Dodge, Ned McGrath, Malcolm Carnwath, Sarah White and Mark Bilodeau.

**3. Demolition Applications**

**Newburyport Manager, LLC**

19 Water Street

Partial Building Demolition

Linda Smiley said the applicant has requested to withdraw the application without prejudice. Bill Harris commented the Commission would have had purview over the partial demolition. He said a public hearing would have been appropriate due to the significance of the building.

**4. Public Hearings**

**BullDawg USA Realty I, LLC c/o Law Offices of Robert L. Brennan, Jr., PC**

**37 Middle Street**

**Roofline change**

Linda Smiley re-opened the public hearing that was continued from the January 16 meeting. Robert Brennan said a new architect has been hired for the project and the plans have been revised. Under the new proposal the entire front roofline would remain unchanged, with the exception of the addition of two skylights. Neither the ridgeline nor the pitch would be changed and no dormers would be added to the Middle Street side of the building. The alterations are to be made to the rear of the structure. Mr. Brennan said the foundation on the Liberty Street side of the structure must be reconstructed and the addition at the rear of the structure will be extended. This work involves the existing addition and not the original structure. Mr. Brennan thanked the Commission for allowing the time to revise the plans.

Linda Smiley opened the hearing to comments from those who wish to speak in opposition to plans. Kevin Bannigan, 43 Middle Street, Unit 1, submitted two letters written in opposition to the original plans, but said he doubted the authors would be opposed to the current proposal. He commended the applicant for the modifications to the plans.

Linda Smiley opened the hearing to comments from those who wish to speak in favor of the plans. Erwin Schowengerdt commended the applicant on finding an architect who is sensitive to the neighborhood. Rowan Hochstedler, 39 Middle Street, said the building in its current condition is an eyesore and is not in keeping with the rest of the street. He said he and other

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abutters want the project to move forward. He added he is pleased with the new plans. Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, said he is pleased the Commission has worked with the applicant to avoid the imposition of the demolition delay. He said the Commission imposed the delay only once for every seven applications in the first three years the ordinance was in place. He said the current project exemplifies the way in which the Commission works to find alternatives that are appropriate for both the property owner and the community. He said the revised plans represent a significant improvement and would benefit both the abutters and the community as a whole. He asked the Commission to write a letter of support for the project to the ZBA. He also asked if the applicant has looked into possible tax credits. Mr. Brennan said to this point the applicant has only been focused on design issues. He intends to investigate the tax credits further and is appreciative for Mr. Harris' offer of assistance. Tom Kolterjahn said he is pleased the applicant listened to the comments of the Commission and the public and he approves of the changes to the plans.

Linda Smiley thanked the applicant for working with the Commission. She said the project is a good example of what the Commission likes to achieve. The final result is a plan that works for both the applicant and the community. She asked for comments from the Commission members. Sarah White said she is pleased the applicant listened to the comments of the Commission and appreciates the amount of work that went into arriving at an acceptable plan. She is happy with the changes. She also said the Commission must look beyond the current state of a structure and consider the way it once was and what it might be.

Linda Smiley moved to accept the changes for 37 Middle Street as proposed. Sarah White seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **5. Correspondence**

Linda Smiley read a letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission written in support of a variance for handicapped access for 42 Merrimac Street. A substantial reconstruction of the front entrance would be required for access to be provided.

#### **6. Minutes**

Sarah White moved to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2014 meeting as submitted. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.