

Newburyport Historical Commission

February 27, 2020

City Council Chambers

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Glenn Richards called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Ron Ziemba, Christopher Fay, Glenn Richards, Patricia Peknik and Malcolm Carnwath.

3. Demolition Delay Applications

Preservation Timber Framing, Inc.

195 High Street

Full Building Demolition - Barn

Aaron Sturgis described the plans to restore an 18th century timber frame carriage barn. The barn would be disassembled and reassembled on a new foundation. The barn sits at grade and there is decay at the sills. While the rafters remain intact, the posts are in poor condition. The siding and the large door on the front façade are not original. The roof is asphalt. The design proposed for the façade is based on historic buildings in Newburyport. As much of the original frame as possible would be saved and where not possible, its materials would be replaced in kind. The bead board ceiling and walls would be retained. The height of the new structure would be the same as that of the original. The Commission members voted that the barn is historically significant at the October 10, 2019, meeting

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the Newburyport Preservation Trust strongly supports the application and the project is a wonderful one for Newburyport. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said it unusual for accessory buildings to be restored.

Glenn Richards moved to approve the plans for the disassembly and reassembly of the barn as proposed. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Blake and Margo Witherington

78 Middle Street

Full Building Demolition – Garage

The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing garage and rebuild it on the same footprint, with the same height and roof pitch. Tom Kolterjahn evaluated the structure and determined it was not worth saving. The Commission members suggested that the applicants salvage whatever materials from the structure they could. Some had concerns about the proposed dormer and suggested raising the roof of the structure four feet and changing its pitch so that the dormer would not be necessary.

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Christopher Fay moved that the garage is not historically significant and to release it for demolition. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. General Business

Vera Ristorante, LLC c/o John A. Santaniello

31-35 Market Square, Unit 1

DOD Advisory Review

The applicant is seeking guidance on the plans for the first-floor windows, which he would like to be able to open in the warm weather. He is not in a hurry to complete the work and is willing to take time to improve the plans. The Commission members commented that the existing windows are not appropriate for the historic structure. Large pane windows should be used. The building is a commercial one and the windows should not be the same as would be found in a residential structure. The first-floor windows should be compatible with those on the upper floors and with adjacent buildings. The applicant was advised to provide drawings that show how the windows would look installed in the structure. Glenn Richards and Patricia Peknik will work with the applicant and his designer to improve the plans.

Cushing House

98 High Street

Discussion of Preservation Restriction

The preservation restriction on the Cushing House requires approval for any major work on the structure. The Historical Society has applied for CPA funds to install a new electrical system. The work would be done in such a way that the historic fabric of the house would not be disturbed. MHC holds the preservation restriction and the approval of the work is not under the purview of the NHC.

The applicant is seeking NHC approval of a new preservation restriction on the Cushing House. The language of the document is the same as has been used in the other preservation restrictions the City holds. A question arose as to whether the restriction should include the collections. The applicant said the collections are protected through insurance and it would not be appropriate to include them in the restriction.

Ron Ziemba moved to accept the new draft preservation restriction for the Cushing House. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Other Business

Two prior applications were amended by the Planning Office staff after the February 13 meeting. The application for 35 Temple Street was for a full building demolition for a shed. The structure considered for demolition does not meet the definition of an accessory building or shed. It is a part of the main structure. In addition, a full building demolition application was submitted for 249-251 Water Street, but the plans that were presented at the meeting were for a partial demolition and renovation.

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6. Minutes

Christopher Fay moved to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2020, meeting as submitted. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.