

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Council Chambers
April 3, 2014
Minutes

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Linda Smiley at 7:45 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Linda Smiley, Stephen Dodge, Malcolm Carnwath and Bill Todd. Peter Binette was also in attendance.

3. Public Hearings

Tyrus Porter

178 Water Street

Roofline Change

Linda Smiley said the applicant has requested to withdraw the application. She had invited members of the community to the meeting to discuss the impact of sea level rise on historic properties. She said the applicant had proposed raising a structure by three feet in order to avoid the high cost of property insurance that was a product of the Bigger Waters Act. The insurance regulations have subsequently been changed.

Mike Strauss, 56 Federal Street, shared information on sea level rise he obtained from a meeting he had attended in New Hampshire. A brief general discussion took place on the FEMA maps, insurance rates and the role of the City, but not within the context of preservation.

4. Preservation Restrictions

Congregation Ahavas Achim Preservation Restriction

The preservation restriction for the temple has been approved by City Council. Linda Smiley moved to approve the preservation restriction for Congregation Ahavas Achim. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Kelley School Preservation Restriction

Andy Port said the condition of the building has deteriorated due to water infiltration. The Mayor has decided it would not be economically viable to keep the building and she wishes to sell it to a private developer for residential units. A preservation restriction for the exterior of the structure would be a part of the RFP that is currently being prepared. The Commission members will send their comments on the draft restriction to the planning office in order that the final document might be approved at the meeting.

5. Demolition Applications

Michael D. Lavoie c/o Scott M. Brown, Architect

43 Fair Street

Partial Demolition and Roofline Change

Scott Brown said the applicant is proposing to replace the roof on a rear el because the second floor ceiling height of this first-period home is inadequate. The el, which he said dates from the late 19th century, would be replaced in kind with a new foundation. The applicant would like to make the home more efficient by removing two sets of stairs and replacing them with a new staircase from which all four floors could be accessed. The front stairs are original but do not reach the attic. The applicant wishes to remove the front staircase to open up the living area.

Linda Smiley moved the structure is historically significant. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. A site visit will take place on Saturday, April 5 at 8:30 a.m.

Newburyport Manager, LLC

1 Titcomb Street

Full building demolition

Linda Smiley moved the structure is historically significant. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Tom Kolterjahn said the structure is a good sample of its period and it contributes to the downtown historic district. He said the form is solid and the building could be moved and perhaps used for community benefit, such as affordable housing. Bill Harris urged the developer to work with the city and move the building.

Linda Smiley moved to impose a demolition delay on 1 Titcomb Street with the acknowledgement the building should not remain in its current location and the understanding the Commission would like to see the building moved. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Newburyport Manager, LLC

9 Titcomb Street

Full building demolition

Linda Smiley moved that the building is not historically significant. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Newburyport Manager, LLC

83 Merrimac Street

Full Building Demolition

Peter Binette said the Fire Department is in the process of posting the building. Linda Smiley moved that the structure is historically significant. She said she has been inside the building and the condemnation that is in progress is not without merit. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Tom Kolterjahn said the roof has been open for many years and in his opinion the structure could not be saved. Linda Smiley moved to release the building for demolition. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Newburyport Manager, LLC

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85-87 Merrimac Street
Full Building Demolition

Linda Smiley moved that the building is not historically significant. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the March 6 and March 20 meetings was tabled.

7. Correspondence

A copy of a letter to MHC from Lynch, DeSimone, & Nysten, LLP regarding 40 Merrimac Street was received. No comment from the Commission was requested.

A letter was received from Building Commissioner regarding a carriage barn at 193 High Street. He denied a request from the property owner for an emergency order.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.