

Newburyport Historical Commission
City Hall Auditorium
June 4, 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, Mark Bilodeau and Ned McGrath. Assistant Building Inspector Peter Binette was also in attendance.

3. Demolition Applications

None

4. Advisory Review

None

5. General Business

Preservation Restriction for 386 High Street

Mark Bilodeau moved to approve the preservation restriction for 386 High Street. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Preservation Restriction for 223 High Street

The Planning Board previously approved a plan to subdivide 223 High Street. In exchange for the construction of four units at the front of the property, a preservation restriction would be placed on the Queen Anne structure that sits back from High Street. The Commission had approved of the elements of the preservation restriction at the time it was proposed. As an additional condition of the special permit, land at the rear of the property abutting the Nock Middle School would be transferred to the City.

The owner did not meet the conditions of the special permit and did not file the preservation restriction with the Registry of Deeds. The land at the rear of the property is not yet within the City's control but the City is ready to move ahead with the construction of new playing fields behind the Nock Middle School. A new developer has become involved with the property. The attorney for the developer, Lisa Mead, has asked the Planning Board to change the conditions of the special permit. She requested that the preservation restriction not be sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for review because this would delay the project. A restriction approved by MHC would be in effect in perpetuity. Without MHC approval, the restriction would expire in 30 years.

The closing for the sale of the property is scheduled for June 24. The trustees of the property and the buyer agreed that after the closing, a permanent preservation restriction would be sent to MHC for approval. Sarah White would prepare the documents necessary for a State-sanctioned preservation restriction for the new owner.

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Towle Property

At the time the First Republic Corporation planned to construct a condominium development on the Towle property, NHC members toured the 1690 house and created a list of interior features that were to be preserved. The barn on the property was to be given to the City. The project was not completed and the property eventually changed hands. The new owner wishes to modify the plans for the development and intends to now retain ownership of the barn. The owner has proposed to instead construct a single-story structure for the City. Lisa Mead, the attorney for the owner, asked that the chairs of the Planning Board and NHC walk through the 1690 house, which will be a single-family residence, to review the features to be retained. Sarah White will request that Tom Kolterjahn attend the site visit as well.

French Church

A letter was received from Deb Pare that stated the façade of the church at the corner of Beck and Federal Streets would be rebuilt with water struck brick. The building suffered structural damage from ice dams.

Demolitions

Peter Binette said the Lombardi building on Titcomb Street and the former Kathy Ann's bakery on Merrimac Street are soon to be demolished.

6. Minutes

Ned McGrath moved to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2015 meeting as submitted. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Ned McGrath moved to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2015 meeting as amended. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

7. Public Comment

Bill Harris, 56 Lime Street, said he would like the Commission to schedule a review of the Section 106 mitigation for the easement needed for the proposed Harbormaster's facility. The easement would be for the construction of a utility corridor under Custom House Way. Custom House Way is under the control of the Waterfront Trust. The Declaration of Public Trust must be amended because as it is currently written the Trust is prohibited from granting easements. Mr. Harris said proper notice was not given to the abutters, NHC or MHC for the Chapter 91 license application. He would like an archaeologist to be on site during the work.

8. Adjournment

Ned McGrath moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.