

**Newburyport Historical Commission**  
Mayor's Conference Room  
July 12, 2017  
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, Malcolm Carnwath, Mark Bilodeau and Stephen Dodge. Ned McGrath participated by telephone.

**3. Demolition Delay Application**

**Cummings Architects**

30 Madison Street

Partial Demolition and Roofline Change

Jeff Moore represented the applicant, who is proposing to restore the 1750 Benjamin Thurlow house. A two-story addition would be constructed on the footprint of an existing one-story section that was not original to the structure. The roofline would be altered to convert the structure to a saltbox. The new roof would be three inches higher than the existing and the plane of the existing roofline will be retained internally. Red cedar clapboards would be added to the front façade. The remaining facades would be of white cedar. A new wood door would be added along with nine over six wood windows with simulated divided lights.

Members of the public were asked for comments. Michael Graf spoke on behalf of Jennifer Graf, 32 Madison Street, who thinks the work would vastly improve the property. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said in this instance he would not be opposed to the roofline change because the existing flat roof detracts from the structure. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, commented that the paneled shutters being proposed are not of a style common to Newburyport.

Sarah White moved to approve the application with the condition the plans are followed as presented except with regards to the shutters, which shall either be omitted or louvered. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**4. Advisory Review**

**George Carey, Sea Level Oyster Bar**

1 Market Square

DOD Special Permit: Review of Proposed Sign

At the February 22 meeting the Commission voted to recommend the project to the Planning Board with certain conditions. The members were not in favor of a sign being mounted to or painted on a brick façade. They instead suggested a sign be painted or attached to the new hipped-roof structure over the rear seating area. The Planning Board subsequently asked the NHC to review a proposal by the applicant to mount a sign on the second level of the stair tower,

adjacent to the deck, where the brick is not historic. At the June 14 meeting the members voted to approve the installation of a wood sign with a dark-colored background and gold lettering. Neither the applicant nor his representative was in attendance at this meeting.

Attorney Mark Griffin spoke of his client's need for signage in a prominent location to attract customers. The applicant is proposing to use fasteners inserted in the mortar of the non-historic brick on the rear façade to install signage of the same style as was used on the front façade. Three lights would illuminate the sign. Peter Kelly spoke in favor of the project, saying increased activity at the restaurant would benefit the Firehouse Center for the Arts.

Sarah White, Malcolm Carnwath and Stephen Dodge agreed with the applicant's proposal for the placement and style of the sign. Ned McGrath said he would be opposed to signage on the rear of the structure. In addition to a preservation restriction having been placed on the Firehouse, he does not believe signage advertising a business is appropriate for a park along the river. Mark Bilodeau said the role of the Commission is not to promote business, but rather to protect the city's historic assets. In his opinion it would not be necessary for the signage on rear facade to match that on the front facade. He said the style of the proposed sign is not sensitive to the architecture of the building and thinks it should more in keeping with other signage in the historic downtown.

Stephen Dodge moved to accept signage proposal as presented. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a three to two vote, with Ned McGrath and Mark Bilodeau voting against it.

## **5. General Business**

Mark Griffin, Esq.

496 Merrimac Street

Preservation Restriction

In January 2017 the applicant received a 6(C) special permit from the Planning Board to construct a new home at the rear of the property. To fulfill the public benefit requirement for the special permit, the Planning Board required that a permanent preservation restriction to be held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission be placed on the main house. Michael Steinitz stated in a letter that the MHC would not be interested in holding the restriction due to the degree to which the building has been changed over time. He suggested the NHC hold a 30-year restriction, which would be renewable in perpetuity. The special permit must be amended to remove the requirement that the MHC hold the preservation restriction. Attorney Griffin requested the Commission advise the Planning Board that 30-year restriction would constitute a public benefit.

The preservation restriction includes the requirement that any addition must be made at the rear of the structure and may not be larger than 400 square feet. The Commission members discussed the inclusion a requirement in the restriction that if work is done on the structure in the future, the inappropriate window above the door is to be removed. It was decided that because a restoration plan was not a part of the draft restriction previously submitted to the Planning Board, it would not be appropriate to impose restrictions at this time.

Newburyport Historical Commission  
July 12, 2017

Members of the public were asked for comments. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the preservation restriction would save a modest, affordable historic house and he encouraged the NHC to persuade the Planning Board to accept the change to the special permit. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said the project would result in two modest houses and would preserve the streetscape.

Sarah White moved to approve a 30-year preservation restriction based on the draft that had previously been reviewed and submitted to the Planning Board. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**6. Minutes**

Stephen Dodge moved to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2017 meeting as submitted. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Ned McGrath abstaining.

Mark Bilodeau moved to approve the minutes of the July 5, 2017 meeting as submitted. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Ned McGrath abstaining.

**7. Adjournment**

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Mark Bilodeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.