

Newburyport Historical Commission

July 24, 2019

City Council Chambers

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Glenn Richards called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Ron Ziemba, Christopher Fay, Malcolm Carnwath, Stephen Dodge, Glenn Richards and Patricia Peknik. Ned McGrath participated by telephone.

3. General Business

Charles Griffin

Auburn Street/Old Gaol

Preservation Restriction Discussion

A perpetual preservation restriction is being proposed for the Essex County Gaol buildings, walls and landscaping in conjunction with a plan to modify the existing lot lines. The ZBA has approved the lot line modifications. One significant change has been made to the document since the NHC members last reviewed it. A future owner would be allowed the opportunity to remove the bars on the windows of the gaol with the provision the bars remain on site for possible reinstallation at a future date.

The Commission members were asked for their comments on the revised document. Patricia Peknik asked that the language on page 2 regarding an open landscape be made more specific.

Ned McGrath said the gaol is an important historic structure. He said it is not the role of a preservation restriction to outline the future adaptive reuse of a structure. He would like the document to focus more on the preservation of the gaol than its adaptive reuse. He is concerned about the large number of exceptions from the restriction. There should be more emphasis on the elements to be preserved and these should be more numerous than the exemptions. He also expressed his opinion that references to the construction of a new structure on the site should not be included in the restriction. It was pointed out that the members voted at the June 12 meeting to approve the draft preservation restriction with the condition that they would be able to review and approve the final document.

The NHC members were not yet able to approve the restriction. They only just received the latest version of the document and information is missing from the first page. The document is also labeled as a draft and contains red-lined passages. Glenn Richards is scheduled to meet with Andy Port and will discuss the concerns about the document with him at that time.

4. Minutes

Stephen Dodge moved to approve the minutes of the June 12 meeting as submitted. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Ned McGrath abstaining.

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Christopher Fay moved to approve the minutes of the July 10 meeting as submitted. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Adjournment

Stephen Dodge moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.