

Newburyport Historical Commission
Mayor's Conference Room
July 25, 2018
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, Ron Ziemba, Christopher Fay and Malcolm Carnwath. Ned McGrath participated by telephone. Glenn Richards was absent.

3. General Business

Lisa L. Mead, Esq.

132 High Street

DOD Advisory Review Modification

Lisa Mead submitted modification plans. At the July 11, 2018 meeting, the Commission voted to recommend to the Planning Board that two-over-two windows be used throughout the structure. In several locations on the right side of the front façade the window openings are two feet wide or less, which is too narrow for this treatment to be used successfully. Instead the applicant is proposing to use one-over-one windows in these five locations. This window form would be appropriate for a structure from the Italianate period. Malcolm Carnwath moved to accept the modification. Ron Ziemba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bradley Kutcher

5 Moseley Avenue

Preservation Restriction

The Commission members had no comments on the draft preservation restriction. Christopher Fay moved to approve the preservation restriction for 5 Moseley Avenue. Stephen Dodge seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

223 High Street

Preservation Restriction Violation

A deck was constructed at the rear of the structure, which is in violation of the preservation restriction that was placed on the property. Neither was a building permit issued for the work. The deck has now been removed but some pressure treated wood remains. Ned McGrath moved to send a letter to the property owner describing the violation and outlining the process that is to be followed when work is proposed for the exterior of the structure. Sarah White seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Section 106 Review of Proposed High Street Improvements for Safe Routes to School

The Planning Office was sent a list of the concerns the Commission members discussed at the July 11 meeting. Andy Port presented revised plans. The mast arm that would have extended across the street has been eliminated, as it would not have been in keeping with a residential

neighborhood. The lights would only be illuminated when pedestrians are crossing the street and will be mounted on black ornamental poles.

MassDOT intends to use new brick and granite to replace the materials in kind. The existing materials would be given to the City to be reused in other locations. The Planning Department is working with MassDOT to allow abutters to purchase brick to be installed in place of the existing concrete sidewalks. MassDOT would not install planters on the islands but the City could choose to add them at a later date. The Planning Department would like to minimize the amount of signage installed. MassDOT has agreed to work with the City on signage at the 75% design phase. The Commonwealth's standards require a certain amount of signage but the City could decide to remove some signs at a later date. A public hearing will be held after revised drawings have been received.

The Commission members would like the existing brick and granite to be reused. The City has a stockpile of materials that could supplement those that are too damaged to be reused. Most members were not in favor of the installation of refuge islands and would prefer that additional neck downs be constructed instead. They would be more agreeable to the islands if there were to be of brick rather than concrete. Signage and lights on the side of the road are acceptable. The members recognized the need for public safety but noted their purview is the impact of the plans on historic resources. They expressed their concern that the drawings submitted are not accurate. One issue is the plans do not show the tree belts, which are to be retained. The members requested the WPA plaques in the historic concrete sidewalks to be reinstalled.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn said the position of DOT on several issues is detrimental to the historic character of the street. He would like the historic brick to be reused and said the sidewalks should be of varying widths. He added new granite would not be able to withstand the abuse the existing stone does and it should not be removed from the street. The Commonwealth has a stockpile of granite, as does the City. Juliet Walker said the purpose of the project, which would be entirely federally funded, is to improve the safety of children traveling to and from school. She said High Street is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists, especially for children. She would object to the refuge islands being removed from the plans.

Ron Ziembra moved to authorize the chair to send a letter to MassDOT listing the items of concern to the Commission and stating that, while the Commission recognizes the need for public safety, it is concerned about the negative impacts of the project and that if its list of concerns is adequately addressed, the Commission would be more likely to determine the project would not have an adverse impact on historic resources. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Minutes

Stephen Dodge moved to approve of the minutes of the July 11, 2018 meeting as submitted. Ron Ziembra seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Adjournment

Malcolm Carnwath moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.