

## **Newburyport Historical Commission**

August 14, 2019

City Council Chambers

Minutes

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Glenn Richards called a regular meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:04 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**

#### **David Strutt and Deborah Thomas**

64 Bromfield Street

Demolition Delay Historical Significance Determination

Maurica Thomas represented the applicant, who is proposing to demolish an enclosed porch and construct a larger addition with a new roofline. The main structure was built in the mid 1800's and the porch was added at a later date. Glenn Richards commented that the original structure contributes to the character of the neighborhood. Malcolm Carnwath moved the structure is historically significant. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Davis Simpson, Jr., Maria Lachapelle, and Ryan LaChapelle**

5 Olive Street

Request for Modification

Lisa Mead represented the applicant. At the February 27 meeting, the Commission approved the plans for the expansion of the rear portion of the structure. The applicant is now requesting to modify those plans. A one-story addition with a roof deck would be constructed rather than a two-story addition. Patricia Peknik pointed out that roof decks are a feature of late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures and they compromise the integrity of historic homes. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation does not recommend that roof decks with railings visible from a public walkway be added to historic structures. Attorney Mead displayed a drawing showing a clapboard wall that would screen the roof deck from the public way. It was decided instead the railing would be moved away from the edge of the roof deck. Stephen Dodge moved to approve the plans as amended with the condition the railing of the roof deck shall be recessed so as to not be visible from the public way. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Ned McGrath abstaining.

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**Newburyport Renovations, LLC**

11 Carter Street

**Demolition Delay Historical Significance Determination**

Maurica Thomas and Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to construct an addition to a Greek Revival structure that dates from around 1850. Malcolm Carnwath moved the structure is historically significant. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission members expressed their concerns about the proposed plans. The addition of 600 square feet of living space would significantly change the character of the modest mill worker's house. Patricia Peknik said the houses on Carter Street of all of the same small size. The proposal would not only change character of the house but also that of the entire street. She added that small houses in the city are endangered. Lisa Mead responded the lot widens towards its rear and the addition would not impact the streetscape. Christopher Fay said he is concerned about the size of the proposed addition as it would subsume would the original structure. Glenn Richards said the dormers proposed for both the original house and the addition contribute to the massing of the structure. He suggested the dormers on the original structure be eliminated in order to maintain its historic character. Malcolm Carnwath said every effort should be made to retain the structure's Greek Revival features.

The discussion was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn said the dormers make the structure too busy and the original structure would get lost in the new construction.

**Jay McPartland**

311 Merrimac Street

**Preservation Restriction Informal Discussion**

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to revert a two-family house to its original single-family configuration. A Section 6(c) special permit is being sought from the Planning Board for the construction of a second single-family home at the rear of the property. The applicant is proposing that a perpetual preservation restriction be placed on the original structure to fulfill the public benefit requirement of the special permit.

The Federal-style house dates from 1807 and was once occupied by figures important to the ship-building community. Patricia Peknik pointed out the shrubs in front of the structure are overgrown, which inhibits the degree to which it is visible from the public way. Attorney Mead will bring this to the attention of the applicant.

The discussion was opened to comments from the public. Stephanie Niketic said a restriction is one of the few tools that provide a high level of preservation for a structure. The public benefit is the assurance the building could not be altered.

Glenn Richards moved that preservation of 311 Merrimac Street would provide a benefit to the community and the Historical Commission would be support the pursuit of a perpetual preservation restriction for the structure. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**Letter of Violation for 223 High Street**

A deck was constructed without permission on a structure on which a preservation restriction had been placed. A certified letter was sent from the NHC to the property owner in 2018 but there is no evidence the letter was ever received. Glenn Richards read an updated version of the letter, in which the owner is given the choice of removing the deck or submitting plans for the deck by October 15 for review by the Commission.

**Preservation Restriction Discussion**

Glenn Richards provided an update on current preservation restrictions. He is working with Chuck Griffin to put the restriction for the Old Gaol in a form that would be acceptable to MHC. A new restriction will be prepared for the Cushing House that would be in effect in perpetuity. The current restriction was only of a ten-year duration. The final plans for the electrical work would be provided to the Commission for review and approval. CPA funds are being awarded to the Custom House for much-needed improvements to the HVAC system. Patricia Peknik asked if the restriction could include requirements that the collections could not be sold or the lawn behind the Custom House must remain open.

**4. Minutes**

Ned McGrath moved to approve the minutes of the July 24 meeting as submitted. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**5. Adjournment**

Stephen Dodge moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Ned McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.