

Newburyport Historical Commission

January 27, 2022

Online Meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Glenn Richards called an online meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Joe Morgan, Glenn Richards, Peter McNamee, Marc Cendron and Malcolm Carnwath. Christopher Fay was absent. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay Applications

1 Atkinson Street

Andy Sidford represented the applicant, who is proposing to change the roofline of a single-family house that was constructed in the early 1800s.

Malcolm Carnwath moved that the structure is historically significant and considered for preservation. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

The applicant is proposing to construct a second story above an existing one-story addition at the rear of the house. Approximately 90 square feet would be added to the structure. The footprint would not be changed. The proposal would raise the roof of the addition to the ridge height of the main structure and the gable would be continued. The siding and trim of the addition would match that of the existing structure.

No one from the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the proposal. The Commission members asked questions about the windows. Two-over-two windows would be installed to match those in the existing structure. On the east elevation, two existing windows would be removed and replaced with smaller windows that would be over the kitchen counter. Windows would be installed in new locations on the west elevation. An existing small window would be moved to accommodate a staircase. New windows would be added at the rear of the structure, including tall windows on the first floor that would extend almost to the floor. The front façade would not be changed. Mr. Sidford said his intention is to match the existing windows as closely as possible.

Marc Cendron moved that the structure is preferably preserved. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

Peter McNamee moved to approve the plans as submitted and lift the Demolition Delay. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

4. Amended Demolition Plans

4 Plum Street

Ben Taylor and Jeff Allsopp represented the applicant, who is proposing to construct an addition to a house built around 1800. At the previous meeting, Joe Morgan said that 4 Plum Street could be the same property as 23 Elm Street, which dates from 1750. Attorney Taylor said that the Newburyport Historic District website contains an error with regards to parcel number. The District Data Sheets that are a part of the official City record show that 23 Elm Street is across the street from 4 Plum Street and is not the same property. The information was confirmed at the Assessor's Office.

The proposed plans have been further refined in response to comments from the Commission members. The addition would be smaller in height and footprint than previously proposed. A small overhang would be added above the doorway in the addition. Clapboards would distinguish the addition from the shingled original structure.

The applicant originally proposed to remove and rebuild the roof structure. In the current proposal, the attic timbers would be preserved. The weight of the addition would be carried on a new foundation, which would place less strain on the structure and existing roof system. The current proposal would be less invasive than the prior plan. The addition could be removed without causing damage to the structure. The form of the existing house would be the dominant one. The fascia and soffits of the addition would match those of the original structure.

Joe Morgan thanked Attorney Taylor for the additional research. He said the proposal is a much more sympathetic treatment of the timber frame.

Glenn Richards said the form of the original house is much more evident in the current proposal. He said the new proposal would be a better fit for a small lot on a small street. He had not liked the prior plan, where the ridge of the original structure and addition were at the same height.

Peter McNamee and Malcolm Carnwath agreed that the current proposal is a much better design. Marc Cendron asked about the need for a door in the addition. Attorney Taylor explained that the door on Plum Street is not functional. The appearance of a door is being maintained in that location as a historical reference to the rhythm of the fenestration.

Joe Morgan moved to approve the plans as submitted and lift the Demolition Delay. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

5. DOD/DCOD Advisory Review

79 State Street

Marc Cendron moved to forward the Historic Advisory Report to the Planning Board. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

6. CPA Applications

Newburyport Black History Initiative

Geordie Vining is seeking CPA funding for six to eight historic interpretive signs on Newburyport's Black History. The signs would be similar to those that have been installed on the Rail Trail and in Brown Square. The signs would be placed primarily in the downtown area. The panels would tell the stories of Black Newburyport residents and would illustrate the diversity in the city's past, from the pre-Revolutionary period to the early 20th Century.

Joe Morgan moved to authorize the Chair to send a letter to the CPC stating the NHC approves of the concept of the signage. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

Cushing House Trim Restoration

Susan Edwards described the plan to restore and reconstruct the architectural elements of the Cushing House. The project would include the crown, rope band, bead and dentil moldings, the gutters, the frieze board trim blocks, the soffit and fascia trim and the shutters. The first phase would involve the reconstruction of the shutters on all four facades. As many shutters as possible would be reused and the remainder would be replaced. The elements on the back and garden sides of the structure would be restored in the second phase of work, while the High Street and Fruit Street facades would be addressed in the third phase.

Malcolm Carnwath moved to authorize the Chair to send a letter to the CPC that expresses support for the application. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

Old South Church Clock Painting

Jack Santos said the paint on the 1896 clock has faded. The project would involve the repainting of the clock face, hands and minute markers and the rebalancing of the hands. The wood would be repaired where needed and then scraped, sanded and primed before painting. A preservation restriction has been placed on the building.

Joe Morgan moved to authorize the Chair to send a letter to the CPC that endorses the project. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

7. Minutes

Joe Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the January 13 meeting. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by 4-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, abstain; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

8. Annual Election of Officers

There were no nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Joe Morgan suggested that if the Chair were absent, the members could share the responsibility of running meetings on a rotating basis.

9. Adjournment

Marc Cendron moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).