

Newburyport Historical Commission

February 25, 2021

Online Meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Glenn Richards, Patricia Peknik, Peter McNamee, Joe Morgan, Christopher Fay, Malcolm Carnwath and Marc Cendron. Also in attendance were Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay Historical Significance

a) 37 Prospect Street

Lisa Mead represented the applicant, who is proposing to remove a one-story addition at rear of a three-story Federal-style structure that was constructed in 1810. The addition was constructed around 1906. A roof deck and pergola were added above it at a later date.

Malcolm Carnwath moved that the structure is historically significant and considered for preservation. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Marc Cedron, yes).

4. Demolition Delay Public Hearings

a) 37 Prospect Street

Lisa Mead said the applicant is proposing to remove the one-story addition at the rear of the structure, along with the roof deck and pergola that were constructed above it. A two-story addition would be constructed on a larger footprint. Attorney Mead said the new addition would be smaller in height and footprint than the main house and would be only slightly visible from the public way.

Architect Jeff Taylor described the proposed changes to the structure. The new addition would be sided with wood clapboards. The existing chimney would be retained. The plans include a second-story roof deck. Two windows would be removed from the left side of the main structure. One would be replaced with a larger window and one would be filled in with clapboards.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Diana Kinosian, 42 Temple Street, said the existing structure is larger than the abutting ones. The house is large and would be made even larger. She disagreed with the statement that the addition would not be visible from the public way. Stephanie Niketic, 93 High Street, said she agrees with comments of the abutter. The public comment period was closed.

The Commission members pointed out that the addition would be on the same plane as the original house. A setback of as little as six inches would reduce the visibility of the addition and the roof deck from the street. Jeff Taylor said he would be agreeable

to stepping back the addition, but a bathroom is to be located in this part of the house and there is a limit to the amount its size could be reduced.

Glenn Richards moved to release the structure for demolition with the condition that the new addition shall be stepped back 4.5 inches from the right side of the main structure. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Marc Cedron, yes).

Patricia Peknik pointed out that the vote as to whether or not the structure is preferably preserved should have been taken after the presentation and the public hearing and should not have been a part of the historical significance determination.

5. General Business

a) Request for Support for CPC Letters of Support

The Newburyport Parks Commission and Parks Department are requesting letters of support for two CPC applications for improvements to the Bartlet Mall Frog Pond and the restoration of the Swan Fountain. Charles Griffin provided an overview of the history of the Mall and Kim Turner described the work for which funding is being sought. In 1800, a ravine at the head of Green Street was filled when the promenade was created in front of the Courthouse. This shut off the source of fresh water to the Frog Pond. When the quality of the water in the pond began to decline, a fountain was installed to improve its circulation. This fountain was replaced in the 1989 by one with an increased aeration capacity but the condition of the fountain has deteriorated due to the poor quality of the water.

Algal blooms in the pond have become more severe in recent years and pose a health risk for people and animals. One application has been submitted for funding to 1) conduct a bathymetric survey that would map the contours of the bottom of the pond, 2) install two wells to irrigate the pond and maintain it at a consistent level and 3) obtain granite stones that would create a coping around a portion of the pond. The stones would be engraved with the history of the Mall and the names of donors that have supported the restoration plan. Future phases of the project would involve the grading of the bottom of the pond and the encapsulation of impurities with a liner.

A second application has been submitted for the repair, recleaning and repainting of the fountain. The Commission members were in support of both projects, but expressed some reservations about the engraving the names of donors on the granite stones.

Christopher Fay moved to provide a letter of support for the CPC applications for the improvements to the Bartlet Mall Frog Pond and the restoration of the Swan Fountain. Patricia Peknik seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, absent; Marc Cedron, yes).

6. Correspondence

a) 14 Titcomb Street Preservation Restriction

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MHC has been signed the preservation restriction for the Central Congregation Church at 14 Titcomb Street. The document has been signed and is to be recorded.

b) 64 Purchase Street Preservation Restriction

Comments made by MHC are being incorporated into the draft preservation restriction.

7. Updates from the Chair

The Energy Advisory Committee Building Subcommittee is seeking a representative from the NHC. Peter McNamee said he might be interested but would like to give the matter more thought. A member of the subcommittee will be asked to provide information at an upcoming meeting on the responsibilities of the position.

8. Approval of Minutes

Peter McNamee moved to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2021, meeting. Marc Cedron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes; Marc Cedron, yes).

9. Adjournment

Peter McNamee moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.