

Newburyport Historical Commission

March 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 and Marc Cendron. Malcolm Carnwath was absent. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay Historical Significance Determination

a) 29 Harding Avenue

Nat Norton said the first field card for the structure dates from 1969 and indicates it was previously a camp from Plum Island. The structure is listed in the Assessor's records as having been built in 1869, which he believes to be incorrect. The area was subdivided in 1920 and was known as Moseley Park. The first lots were sold in 1922. The records show the parcel was sold without a building in 1947. Two months later, the ownership was again transferred, and by that time a structure was in place. He said modern lumber was used and he believes the building was constructed in September of 1947, which would make it 74 years old. There are currently no plans for a replacement structure.

Patricia Peknik said she conducted research on the property at the public library. In the 1920s, Moseley Park was divided into lots for summer camps. Small cottages with one or two rooms were situated on the lots and used largely by residents of Joppa. In the 1940s, the construction of year-round houses on the lots began to take place. Around the same time, land on Plum Island was taken by eminent domain for the establishment of the wildlife refuge. The Nobs Beach section of Plum Island was a gathering place for the employees of Towle Silversmiths. Some of the cottages in this area dated from the late 1800s. Many were sold and moved off of the island. The size of the structure would be consistent with that of a cottage. Its floors are pine and the windows were built using wooden pegs. While the existence of a house on the lot is not recorded on a deed until the 1963, it was reported in the *Daily News* in 1955 that vandals had broken into 29 Harding Street. Ms. Peknik said information on the structure should be documented for the public record.

Christopher Fay said more information must be obtained about the property. He said the size of the lot is significant and he believes if the house were constructed in 1947, it would have been larger.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, encouraged the Commission members to seek permission from the applicant to visit the house. He said he or Linda Miller would be available to attend a site visit to give assistance in dating the structure.

Patricia Peknik moved to schedule a site visit. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik,

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yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Marc Cedron, yes).
The applicant agreed to allow a site visit on March 29 at 5:50 p.m.

Christopher Fay commented that many small houses were built after World War II and will soon be 75 years old. These house are historically significant. The importance of workers cottages should be recognized in the same way as High Street houses.

4. Correspondence

a) 342 Merrimac Street

A letter was received from MHC that states the draft preservation restriction required significant corrections and was returned to the applicant.

b) MHC Survey and Planning Grant Award

A \$15,000 grant was received from MHC to update the historical housing survey. A CPA grant had been previously received in the same amount. The existing survey forms were completed in the 1980s. Many more houses are now over 75 years old and would be protected under the ordinance. The work would focus on the preparation of new forms, rather than the updating of the existing forms. A consultant would be hired to prepare the forms. The Commission members could be helpful in compiling an inventory of properties not yet covered by the forms and identifying consultants that might be interested in the work. The Planning Office would be responsible for the scope of services and the contract.

c) 93 State Street

A letter was received from Peter and Maureen Makin in support of the work of Commission in its review of the plans for the Institution for Savings. Glenn Richards said he had sent a letter to the *Daily News* about the proposal, an action which he now views as having been improper.

4. Approval of Minutes

Joe Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2021, meeting. Peter McNamee 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; Marc Cedron, yes).

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.