

Newburyport Historical Commission

June 10, 2021
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 Glenn Richards, Peter McNamee, Joe Morgan, Christopher Fay, Patricia Peknik 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

7 Harbor Street

Doug Deschenes represented the applicant, who is proposing to construct a 216 square foot addition on the second story of a Plum Island cottage. He said the structure has no significant historical components. Scott Brown said the house has been reworked over the years and any historic fabric has been stripped away. Very little of the original structure is left except for some early 20th century framing members. A major renovation was undertaken in 2014. Vinyl windows and siding were installed and a new foundation was added. He said the addition would not change the existing character of the structure.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public. Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the structure does not appear to be worth preserving.

Christopher Fay moved that structure is historically significant. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion failed by a 0-6 vote (Glenn Richards, no; Peter McNamee, no; Joe Morgan, no; Christopher Fay, no; Marc Cendron, no; Patricia Peknik, no).

4. General Business

a) Masonry Pamphlet Discussion

Tom Kolterjahn said a pamphlet on historic masonry had been created to advise homeowners and contractors and was distributed through the Planning Office and Building Department. The information on lime mortar resources was not current and has now been updated. Glenn Richards said the brochure should indicate it supplements the Department of the Interior's Preservation Brief. It should also include the date the document was revised.

Glenn Richards moved to authorize the Chair to revise the masonry pamphlet as necessary with input from the Newburyport Preservation Trust and to adopt it for distribution by the Planning Office and Building Department. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes).

b) Survey and Planning Grant

Glenn Richards said CPC funds have been awarded to hire a consultant to update the list of contributing structures. Patricia Peknik and the Planning Office are working on the RFP. The NHC should identify the target properties and the consultant will be responsible for preparing the forms. The funds should be sufficient for the preparation of forms for 110 to 130 structures. Andy Port said the Commission should prioritize the development of forms for structures in the DCOD that are not currently protected so they could be incorporated by reference into the Ordinance. This would be more beneficial than updating forms that would not change regulatory protections. Patricia Peknik said she has compiled a list of buildings in DCOD in the north end for which there is no Form B. She said these are mainly small structures that could be in danger. Other members could begin work on a list of structures in the south end.

5. Updates from the Chair

A discussion took place on time management during meetings. The Commission does a disservice to applicants if time is not well managed. A time limit should be established for presentations. The time limit could be ten to 15 minutes, and could be extended at the discretion of the Commission. Applicants should be made aware of the time limit prior to meetings in order that they might prepare their materials accordingly. This could be made a part of the application instructions. The Commission members should review the materials before meetings to limit the length of time needed for presentations. During meetings, an effort should be made to focus the discussion and avoid digressions. Public comments could be kept to two minutes for well-attended meetings, but as members of the public often have valuable information, it would be preferable to not impose a time limit under most circumstances. The members should not be constrained by time in conducting their deliberations. Applicants should not be allowed to interject during deliberations. A very brief outline of the procedures could be provided at the beginning of the meeting. The Commission should not be asked to review incomplete applications.

6. Minutes

Joe Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the May 27 meeting. Christopher Fay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, abstain).

7. Adjournment

Peter McNamee moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Marc Cendron seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Marc Cendron, yes).