

Newburyport Historical Commission

July 14, 2022
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 Joe Morgan, Marc Cendron, Glenn Richards, Christopher Fay, Andrew Bernhardt and Malcolm Carnwath. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. General Business

a) DOD/DCOD Advisory Review

24 Merrimac Street

Andy Port described the plans for expanding Market Landing Park. The parking lots to the east and west of the existing waterfront park would be reduced in size and grass and plantings would be added, along with plazas and a multi-use path. The Ways to the Water would be maintained. Unicorn Street would be extended across Merrimac Street with a new way.

The element of the plans under the purview of the NHC is the new restroom facility. The architecture of the facility should be appropriate for the downtown. The City Council does not want the building to be brick. Horizontal and vertical white cedar siding is instead being proposed. The foundation would be granite. Solar panels would be hidden on the roof behind a parapet wall. A visitor booth would be located near the street. Behind this would be a mechanical room and individual restrooms with exterior doors that would be protected by an overhang. Details will be added as the design of the facility evolves.

The Commission members were asked for their comments on the proposed design. Joe Morgan had no comment. Christopher Fay said he does not have any issues with the proposed design. He said the city is changing and is not a museum. Marc Cendron said the architecture is boring and lacks imagination. Malcolm Carnwath said the proposal does not fit with the architecture of the city. He would like the design to augment the downtown rather than detract from it. Andrew Bernhardt said the structure would be highly visible and its proposed design has little connection to the downtown. Glenn Richard said that according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, new structures should not mimic historic architecture, but should be compatible with it. He said the proposed design makes it apparent that this is not a historic structure.

Dan Dwyer of Sasaki Associates said the design properties of the proposed structure are in keeping with the architecture of the city. The Federal style is characterized by a lack of ornamentation, a deemphasized roofline and the rhythm of the elements.

Glenn Richards will draft a DOD Historical Report for review at the July 28 meeting.

b) Correspondence

A letter was received from Anne Joyce, who would like her home, the Samuel Emery House at 211 Storey Avenue, to be listed as a contributing structure on the district data sheets.

4. Other Business

Andy Port said the House and Senate are working to pass legislation that would extend the authorization to hold local public meetings remotely. The July 28 meeting would be held in public if the authorization is not extended.

5. Minutes

Marc Cendron moved to approve the minutes of the June 23 meeting. Andrew Bernhardt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by 5-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, abstain).

6. Adjournment

Marc Cendron moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Andrew Bernhardt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Andrew Bernhardt, yes; Marc Cendron, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).