

Newburyport Historical Commission

July 23, 2020
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 Christopher Fay, Glenn Richards, Patricia Peknik, Peter McNamee, Joe Morgan, Ron Ziembra and Malcolm Carnwath. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

3. Demolition Delay Applications

3-5 School Street

Lisa Mead submitted a request to withdraw the demolition application. Glenn Richards moved to accept the withdrawal of the application for 3-5 School Street without prejudice. Peter McNamee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziembra, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, yes).

4. General Business

Preservation Restriction Discussion

Andy Port reviewed the preservation restriction for the Newburyport High School. This version of a preservation restriction is one that would meet the standards of both MHC and NHC. He noted that the City is prohibited from holding a restriction on a City-owned property. He highlighted the features that the Commission members should expect to find in a preservation restriction. The document would typically include provisions that would restrict the expenditure of funds and outline prohibited activities. It would include standards for review and information on insurance, indemnification, inspection and recording, among other items. The document must be conveyed and approved, signed by the Mayor and notarized. The grantee must accept the document, which must be approved by Massachusetts Historical Commission. Exhibits would include a legal property description, a baseline documentation plan, a list of character-defining features, an assessor's parcel map and an explanation of the historical significance of the building. Minor changes may be done by right but major changes must be approved. Mr. Port said the preservation restriction process is a lengthy one that is sometimes used in place of historic districts but may not be the most efficient preservation tool.

Patricia Peknik said she is skeptical about placing restrictions on private houses that already been preserved. She said preservation has become the cost that is being paid for development. She reviewed some policies and procedures from other historical commissions.

Joe Morgan asked about procedures for reviewing properties with preservation restriction. Mr. Port said the City has limited resources for this but it is something the Zoning Administrator attempts to monitor.

Historic Structure Survey Update

In 2016, the Historical Commission received a CPA grant in the amount of \$15,000 to expand the historic structures survey. Form B has not been completed for some significant structures in Newburyport. Outbuildings, which might be significant in their own right, were generally not included on the survey forms. While Form B provides baseline information, the list of contributory structures is even more important.

Andy Port asked for volunteers from the Commission or the community who would work with the consultant. The grant money must be returned if it is not used. Patricia Peknik said this might be a good opportunity for graduate students, such as those at the Boston University Historic Preservation Program. Stephanie Niketic said property owners must agree to add a structure to the list. She said effort should not be spent on structures for which the owner would not grant permission or that are not already listed on National Register. She has a list of buildings for which there is no Form B. Glenn Richards and Patricia Peknik will discuss the way in which the project should move forward.

5. Approval of Minutes

Peter McNamee moved to approve of the minutes of the July 9, 2020, meeting as submitted. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Glenn Richards, yes; Patricia Peknik, yes; Christopher Fay, yes; Peter McNamee, yes; Joe Morgan, yes; Ron Ziemba, yes; Malcolm Carnwath, abstain).

6. Adjournment

Joe Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. Malcolm Carnwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.