

## **Newburyport Historical Commission**

August 13, 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 and Ron Ziemba. Malcolm Carnwath was present but not able to participate in the meeting. Also in attendance were Planning Director Andy Port, Planner Katelyn Sullivan and note taker Gretchen Joy.

### **3. Demolition Delay Applications**

#### **Pattiann Bampos**

2 Neptune Street

Roofline Change

The early 18<sup>th</sup> century structure is one of oldest in the city. The original part of the house was built in 1657. The bays nearer the river were added between 1710 and 1720.

Patricia Peknik said there are only ten houses in the state that are of this age and many are museums. She said it is extraordinary that a first period house is inhabited.

Patricia Peknik that moved the house is historically significant and preferably preserved. Christopher Fay second 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).

The applicant is proposing to construct a dormer with skylights in order to enlarge the bathroom and change the orientation of a closet. She argued the house does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards because it is not being used as it was historically. While it remains a residence, she does not use on outhouse or cook over a fire. Glenn Richards said the continued use as a residence makes the Standards applicable. The applicant added that her insurance company is concerned about the condition of the roof.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public. Adam Weisman, owner of 2.5 Neptune, the other part of the house, said he is not in favor of the proposal. He said the substantial change to the roofline would be visible from Water Street and his part of the house. He said the roofline is an iconic one and not all of the restoration the applicant has undertaken has been done with a full respect for the materials. The applicant responded that Mr. Weisman does not live in the house full time and he has a modern deck. She said the deck should prevent the house from being preferably preserved and she does not think it realistic for a homeowner to have a small bathroom and one closet. She does not agree that the house is the oldest in the city and one of ten oldest in Massachusetts. She cited examples of changes that have made to other old houses. She submitted letters of support for the proposal.

Tom Kolterjahn, 64 Federal Street, said the Newburyport Preservation Trust strongly opposes the proposed shed dormer. He said the structure is a wonderful testament to old buildings and its saltbox shape is rare and iconic. A shed dormer would

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dramatically alter the streetscape and the structure and would be not be appropriate. He said it would be a tragedy to lose the unique shape of the roofline. A letter was read that was submitted by Linda Miller, 20 Ship Street, that stated that the NHC should be a steward of one of the oldest structures in the city. Phillip Schwartz spoke of the need for a balance between making a house livable while preserving it.

Patricia Peknik said the role of the Commission is to protect the exterior of the house. She said the saltbox form is the key defining feature of the structure and as such should be preserved. She said the proposed changes would reduce the value of the house. She said she would oppose the addition of any dormer on this structure. Joe Morgan said the house at 212 Water Street is a saltbox, although it is not as old. A dormer was added to this structure, but the situation is not comparable. The size and location are factors that determine if a dormer compromises the slope of a roof. He said in this instance, there would not be an acceptable solution for a dormer. The roofline on Water Street is highly visible and its form should be preserved. Christopher Fay agrees a dormer would not work on this unique property. He said not a hair on this house should be harmed. Ron Ziembra said the livability of a structure is important to him, although this is not within the purview of the Commission. He said he must agree with the other Commission members in this instance due to the age of the structure. Peter McNamee said livability is not within the purview of the NHC. The role of the Commission is to safeguard the treasures of the community. He said this first-period house is a remarkable property that is very visible. It has stood for over three centuries as it is and should be left with its distinctive roofline. Glenn Richards said that if the demolition delay were to be imposed, the applicant would be able to install a dormer by right after one year, but not of the same dimensions as the one that has been proposed.

Patricia Peknik moved to impose the demolition delay on 2 Neptune Street. Christopher Fay second 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 Ziembra, yes).

**Craig Pessina**

46 Toppans Lane

Roofline Change

Aileen Graf represented the applicant and said the house was built in 1887. Glenn Richards moved the structure is historically significant and preferably preserved. Peter McNamee 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 Ziembra, yes).

The applicant intends to restore the house. The enclosed porch has been opened up to reveal more of the original structure. A six-foot dormer on the shed roof was located in such a way that it provides awkward access to a bedroom. The dormer is visible from Low Street. The applicant is proposing to enlarge the dormer to 9'-3" and move it to the center of the shed roof, where it would be positioned over a staircase. The new dormer would have a similar profile to the existing one.

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Ron Ziemba moved to approve the plans 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).

**Kevin Fruh**

368 High Street

The structure was constructed in 1890. Glenn Richards moved is the structure is historically significant and preferably preserved. Peter McNamee 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).

The applicant is proposing to remove a 15' x 8' single-story addition at the rear of the structure. The applicant did not submit a plan for a new addition at the time.

No one from the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the application. Patricia Peknik said the addition is not old and not in good condition. She recommended the applicant review the Secretary of the Interior's Standards when developing future plans.

Patricia Peknik moved to issue a demolition permit. Ron Ziemba 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).

**4. General Business**

**10 Auburn Street**

Gaol Roof Dormer

Chuck Griffin said he would like to use copper on a dormer. Copper was not listed as a roofing material in the preservation restriction. Glenn Richards moved to approve the use of flat seam copper for the pediment dormer. Christopher Fay 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).

**223 High Street Preservation Restriction Violation**

The property owner had been issued a violation notice that required the remove posts that were installed for a deck without a permit or to submit plans for the deck. A significant amount of time has passed and no action has been taken.

Glenn Richards moved to authorize the chair to send a letter stating legal action would be taken if the required response is not made within 30 days. Christopher Fay 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).

**National Alliance of Preservation Commissions**

Patricia Peknik said she virtually attended the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. She would like to report on this at a future meeting.

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**5. Approval of Minutes**

Christopher Fay moved to approve of the minutes of the July 23, 2020, meeting. 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).

**6. Adjournment**

Christopher Fay moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Joe Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.