

Northampton Historical Commission Minutes

DATE: Monday, April 25, 2016

TIME: 5:30 PM

PLACE: Northampton Police Department 1st Floor Classroom, 29 Center Street

Members Present: David Drake, Martha Lyon, Barbara Blumenthal, Pauline Fogel

Staff Present: Sarah LaValley

Chairman Drake called the meeting to Order, 5:30

General Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

March 28, 2016

Ms. Blumenthal moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Ms. Lyon, the motion carried unanimously.

Presentation of Additional Materials and Request for Approval of 'Alternate Plan' to Demolition, 9 Pomeroy Terrace

Matt Campagnari presented detailed plans for the proposed replacement structure. It is proposed to be handicapped accessible, which necessitated some alterations on the exterior.

Ms. Fogel observed that the building will still look like new construction, but that the Commission's primary concerns all seem to have been addressed.

Fred Zimnoch, neighbor, stated that he was hoping for a building that is compatible with the neighborhood, and the proposal seems like it will be.

Ms. Lyon stated that the mission of the Demolition Review Ordinance is to try to prevent loss of historic fabric in the first place, but that the building would have been difficult to salvage, and having people back in this area will be a benefit of the project.

Ms. Fogel moved to find that the proposed building fits into the streetscape and proposed National Register district; accept the plans for a replacement structure as a 'alternate plan' pursuant to the Ordinance, and allow demolition once photo documentation has been provided. Seconded by Ms. Blumenthal, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Potential Future Ordinance Revisions

The Commission discussed possible revisions to the Local Historic District and Demolition Review ordinances.

Ms. Lyon suggested that a rolling 50-year age would provide additional review, but may be challenging to enact. Ms. LaValley suggested including pre-World War Two construction. Ms. Blumenthal suggested that an updated significant buildings list could be created.

Chairman Drake suggested that the regulated buildings and structures list could be expanded to include those built in 1940 and earlier, which could later be revisited.

Ms. LaValley will update the 5-year demolition review report to Council, as well as investigate standards for photo documentation.

The Commission reviewed the list of projects exempt from review under the Local Historic District ordinance, and agreed that staff should draft a draft revision for discussion, with the following changes:

- Clarify that siding replacement with the same color and dimensions is exempt
- Remove lighting from the list of exemptions
- Remove parking areas from an exempted item under landscaping
- Add 'driveways, resurfacing of existing layout only'
- Remove shutters as an exemption

Ms. Lyon suggested that an information session for property owners in the district may be useful.

State Hospital Updates

Ms. Blumenthal stated that an updated plaque will be installed at the cemetery memorial bench site, and that the Memorial Committee is planning an event for the neighborhood on May 22.

Chairman Drake suggested that the lion that had been on the fountain could be used as a fundraiser.

River Road Retaining Wall Update

Ms. LaValley provided plans for the project, including alternatives, provided by the Department of Public Works. Ms. Lyon suggested that DPW cut costs by selecting the untextured wall, and using any available to select the timber guard rails instead of aluminum.

Adjourn - 7:35