

**Northampton Historical Commission
Minutes**

DATE: Monday, September 27, 2021
TIME: 5:30 PM
PLACE: Remote Online Meeting

Member	Present
Martha Lyon, Chair	X
Barbara Blumenthal, Vice-Chair	
Jonathan Daube	X
Steven Moga	X
Dylan Gaffney	X
Harvey Hill	X
Craig Della Penna	X
Sarah LaValley - staff	X

Martha Lyon called the meeting to Order, 5:32 PM

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

None

Chairs Report

Martha noted that MassHistoric has a new local coordinator and several different workshop opportunities are available. The first round is full, but others will be scheduled. The Memorial Park and State Hospital Walking Tour are both progressing.

5:30 PM: Request for a Local Historic District Certificate Appropriateness pursuant to Section 195 of the Northampton Code for proposed rooftop solar installation. Justin Smith/SunBug Solar, 137 Elm Street, Map ID 31B-167

Dan Britton, SunBug Solar, provided an overview of the project, Most panels won't be visible from Elm Street, some will be visible from Round Hill Road. The work exceeds the amount of visible roof area – two feet of roof surface - prescribed in the design standards, so a certificate of appropriateness is required. Martha read the solar standards, noting that collectors should be mounted to match the roof slope and piping concealed from view. When considering the installation of solar panels, a building's importance, prominence and historic significance shall be taken into account, along with visual impact and glare. Steve asked if the installation is reversible. Dan replied that it will be modular and on rails, and will be able to be removed. Steve stated that any visual impact to historic character of the building and the district. Dylan suggested a plan that would more closely fit the guidelines. Most panels are not south facing and some efficiency will also be lost due to pitch, so the additional area can make up for some of that to make the project feasible. The panels are not the most technologically advanced available but are close. If the panels were smaller, the cost per energy unit would increase.

Harvey moved to issue a certificate of appropriateness. Seconded by Jonathan.

Public Comment – Michael Hourihan, Round Hill Road, stated that climate change is an urgent issue, and that the work won't be very visible. The two-foot roof standard seems arbitrary, and he encouraged issuance of a certificate.

Abigail Smith, 137 Elm resident, stated that environmental benefit outweighs visual impact. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5:45 PM: Request for a Local Historic District Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to Section 195 of the Northampton Code for proposed window, door, and roof replacement, and chapel shell removal. SNEC Association of SDA, 354 Elm Street, Map IDs 31A-001, 23C-043.

Larry Tuttle, architect, presented an overview of the overall project. Interior mold remediation has been completed. Basement windows are original wood, only the top portions are visible from the street. The sanctuary ceiling is cracking and leaking, and the roof is in need of replacement, and a standing seam metal material is proposed. Hand rail replacement, sidewalk repairs, and exterior door replacement to address splitting and cracking is proposed. The exterior chapel shell at the rear of lot is also proposed to be removed. Martha noted that design specifics are not included for most of the work proposed, and that standards for some proposed items, including dormer and stained glass removal, and metal roof installation, are not met. Dylan expressed concern about stained glass removal. Larry stated that the roof is proposed to match the existing color and would not be shiny. Jonathan suggested that there is not enough detail in the application to allow a decision at this point. Steve noted that some of the elements proposed seem allowable, but sufficient information has not been provided, but others; the alteration of the building profile and roof material, may be of greater concern. Sarah stated that the Commission can provide guidance on additional information necessary, and continue to another meeting to allow the applicant time to provide those details. The Commission requested full plans, window cutsheets, dormer information, roof material alternatives, door details, and historic information about the exterior shell proposed for removal.

Jonathan moved to continue to hearing until October 25 at 5:30 PM. Seconded by Dylan, the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Designate Preservation Plan Subcommittee

The Commission will discuss at the October meeting.

General Discussion of CPA Funding for Private Buildings

Jonathan stated that this could be high-risk, since ownership of private properties can change. Craig suggested that public investments need to be protected, and public funds should be reserved for critical projects. Steve stated that applications should articulate the public benefit being provided.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM