

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, December 9, 2010
Lower Hearing Room
7:00pm
Adopted January 13, 2011

Historical Commission Members Present: David J. Russo, Jr., Thomas P. Melone, J. B. Jones, Marilynne K. Roach, Donald S. Berg, Susan T. Steele

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward

Public Present: See attached Sign-In Form

David J. Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00p.m.

1. Public Hearing – Demolition Permit Application for 428 Mt. Auburn Street, a single family house to be demolished for an open space yard. Applicant/Owner: Jeffrey Bilezikian.

Jeff Bilezikian, applicant/owner, informed that he purchased the property in response to observed development encroachment. He plans to demolish and keep the property as open space. He stated that he had no plans to develop the property.

Russo noted that the property was zoned T (two-family). Bilezikian responded that he might develop a single-family for his parents when they get older.

Clara Sarno, 414 Mt. Auburn, expressed concern about privacy issues with an empty lot. She also was concerned about the loss in property tax revenue and property values. Russo requested that the applicant speak with Sarno regarding this issue after the public hearing. The applicant was agreeable.

Though the property lacked unique architectural significance, Susan T. Steele was concerned about the loss of properties that are older (85 years old). She believed the property, though rundown, could be restored and that it provided visual integrity to the block.

Thomas P. Melone did not find sufficient architectural significance for a preservation outcome.

Russo did not find any architectural detail or architect associated with the property.

J. B. Jones was concerned that nothing was wrong with the property and that future development would be easier to build on a vacant property. Donald S. Berg concurred.

Russo indicated that economically it may be beneficial to maintain the structure. However the HC did not have the ability to order the owner to maintain it.

Vote: Berg moved to find 428 Mt. Auburn not preferably preserved. Steele seconded the motion. Motion **adopted.** **Vote:** 5 Ayes, 1 No (Roach), 1 Abstention (Jones)

2. **2011 HC Meetings Calendar – Approved**
3. **November Minutes – Approved.**
4. **Old Business**
 - a) **Historic Marker Replacement-Ongoing.** Steele checked with McVey Stone for stone sign replacement options. More homework needed.
 - b) **Shick House/Grove Street Economic/Preservation Study–** Steele inquired if Russo had contacted Bill Barry at Mt. Auburn. She suggested following up with an e-mail.
 - c) **Neighborhood Conservation District –** Russo recommended delay until there is favorable support from Town Council.
 - d) **Demolition-Delay Ordinance –** Russo reported that he had spoken with Nancy Scott regarding Ordinance update discussion. Berg informed that he had spoken to the Town Manager.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

