

**Minutes**  
**Watertown Historical Commission**  
**Thursday, February 10, 2011**  
**Lower Hearing Room**  
**7:00pm**  
*Adopted March 10, 2011*

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

**Historical Commission Members Absent:** Elisabeth H. Loukas

**Staff Present:** Christopher J. Hayward, Daphne M. Collins

**Public Present:** See attached Sign-In Form

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

**1. Public Hearing – 8-10 Pearl Street- Review of Demolition Delay and applicant’s progress towards preservation options. Applicant/Owner: Douglas S. Agule, Chatham Development Company, applicant/Michael and Anne Marie Bates, owners.**

Douglas S. Agule, applicant, reported that he had hired Steirbert Associates – Architects to evaluate the structure and provide costs estimates for rehabilitation and addition, and new construction (see attached letter dated 1/27/11). Agule informed that Streibert Associates identified the cost of rehabilitation and addition to be \$176,000 more than new construction.

J. B. Jones asked if the cost of addition had been factored out. Agule responded that it was not economically feasible. He maintained that for units to be marketable, each side had to be increased by 750sq’ or an additional 1500sq’ to the existing structure.

Thomas P. Melone inquired why Steirbert was recommending moving the rehabilitated house. Agule responded that it was necessary to meet the setbacks.

Connie Corbett, real estate agent for the owners, reported that she had shown the property thirty times and no one wanted it. According to Corbett, the only person who did was the applicant who wants to demolish it.

Russo inquired about the time period the property was on the market. Corbett responded that it was on the market for 30 days and that there was “tremendous interest.” Russo noted that MLS records indicated that the property was on the market for only 7 days.

Russo noted that there were three options for the HC – status quo, to lift the delay or extend the delay.

There was general discussion among the HC that the case for demolition presented by the applicant was market and financial driven with no preservation effort options presented. Russo suggested placing the property on the market for a longer period than 7 days and allowing an opportunity for interested preservation buyers to respond. Michael Iodice, owner of Chatham Development Company, stated that the Purchase and Sale Agreement does not allow a superseding offer or an opportunity for the owner to get a better offer.

Susan T. Steele stated that the HC decision cannot be based on hardship. Jones informed that the HC's focus is the historical merits of the property.

Russo proposed that the delay be extended to allow the property to go back on the market in the spring. He thought that thirty individuals expressing interest during a 7 day market period was promising for a rare historic property, built before the Civil War. He advocated for further efforts seeking a preservation option.

**Vote:** Jones moved to extend the demolition delay for 8-10 Pearl Street an additional six months, expiring on September 9, 2011. Donald S. Berg seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

## **2. January Minutes – Approved.**

### **3. Old Business**

- a. Mt. Auburn Cemetery Boundary** – Russo announced that after 8 years a survey of the cemetery's Main Gate boundary between Watertown and Cambridge was scheduled. Russo recognized Steve Magoon's efforts in advancing this effort.
- b. Watertown Outbuilding/Barn Initiative** – Ongoing.
- c. Shick Property Preservation Led** – Economic Development Study is underway. Marilynne K. Roach, Steele, Russo and Melone attended a site visit along with the Mt. Auburn Cemetery staff and the Tufts' student team who will be conducting the study. For the office files, Steele provided a copy of *Urban Ground, An Urban Natural Burial Guide & Site Suitability Study*.
- d. Historic Marker Replacement-** Ongoing.

### **4. New Business**

- a. 270 Pleasant Street (Haartz Mason)** – Jones reported that he attended a community meeting regarding a proposed development for the site – a 174-units, five-story, mixed use project. He informed that the developer proposes to demolish the existing structures. Jones identified the structures as having possible historic merit associated with Watertown's manufacturing history. Christopher J. Hayward said that the site is considered an officially cleaned site under DEP. According to Hayward, the site was the location of a manufacturer of coated fabrics. Hayward, in his capacity as Conservation Agent, reported that the proposal will provide more green space than the existing, blighted, vacant one.

Jones noted that the massing of the site will be larger. Steele inquired if the river views will be impacted.

- b. Employee Recognition Award** – Melone reported that Hayward was the recipient of a recognition award from the Town Council for his appointment as President of the Commonwealth's Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.