

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, December 13, 2012
Watertown Lower Hearing Room
7:00pm
Adopted January 10, 2013

Historical Commission Members Present: David J. Russo, Jr., J. B. Jones, Marilynne K. Roach, Thomas Melone, Susan T. Steele, Elisabeth H. Loukas

Historical Commission Member Absent: Donald S. Berg

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

Public Present: See attached Sign-In Form

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

1. **Public Hearing – Demolition Permit Review – 9 Hersom Street, a single-family home with garage to be replaced by a two-family duplex. Sean Lyons, owner, applicant.**

The item was rescheduled to the next HC Meeting on January 10, 2012.

2. **Public Hearing – Demolition Permit Review – 151 Warren Street – to demolish an existing single family house to be replaced by a new two-family townhouse. Owner: Estate of Gilda Brackett, John Marini, Executor of the Estate; Applicant Douglas Agule**

Doug Agule, applicant, reported that the property was a ranch style residence built in 1950 in a multi-family zone. He proposed to demolish the structure and build a 2-family replacement similar to the two-family structures in the neighborhood.

Russo inquired if he had considered using the existing structure. Agule responded that the existing building does not meet present zoning standards.

Jones inquired about the height of the replacement. Agule noted that the replacement structure would be shorter than the abutting building to its right.

Melone thought it was a great looking house from the exterior. Agule replied that the interior was outdated and worn.

Jones thought the existing and replacement structures were unremarkable.

Steele regretted the loss of the structure and the diversity of designs in the neighborhood.

Russo remarked that the neighborhood had changed in the last 40 years with the Chatham Condo complex.

Vote: Jones moved to find 151 Warren Street as not preferably preserved. Melone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Public Hearing Continuance – Demolition Permit Review –917 Belmont Street, - Review of Demolition Delay and applicant’s progress towards preservation options. Walker School, owner; Steven Tannenbaum, applicant.

Russo reported that there had been meaningful, good faith discussions between all the stakeholders and progress was being made to find a preservation option to 917 Belmont Street.

David L. Smith, 3 Waverly Road, Waltham, a member of the Historical Society of Watertown and the Waltham Historical Commission, supported the extension of the demolition delay due to the social, historical and architectural merits of the property, one of ten of the most endangered properties in Massachusetts.

Councilor Stephen Corbett, 14 Irving Street, supported the continuation and extension of the delay. He encouraged the preservation of the front of the structure.

Councilor Vincent Piccirilli, 203 Orchard Street, supported the extension of the delay. He was encouraged by the creative solution being negotiated to restore and preserve the house.

Harvey Steiner, Chair of the Historic District Commission, supported the extension of the delay.

Ernesta Krackiewicz, 77 Riverside Street, owner of the first Landmarked property in Watertown, supported the delay extension and urged that a preservation option be found.

Bob Erickson, 27 Lloyd Road, supported the extension delay. He felt that the preservation of the structure would be an important legacy for future residents.

Barbara Ruskin, 140 Spring Street, and representative member of Sustainable Watertown supported the demolition delay extension and the preservation of the structure.

Russo read Section 3.6(a) and (b) of the Procedure for the *Demolition of Historically or Architecturally Significant Buildings* to determine whether the demolition delay was effectively satisfied.

Jones was encouraged by the on-going discussion and supported that the 6 month demolition delay be extended another 6 months to allow further progress in the discussions.

Roach noted that the property had been found by Preservation Mass as one of the ten most endangered properties in the Commonwealth. She noted that the intention of the designation is to assist in the preservation options of the structure.

Russo repeated that the negotiations are of good faith to find a mutually agreeable solution. However, there was no formal, legal agreement at this time.

Jones reminded the HC that the HDC Historic District designation is proceeding in tandem.

Russo read Councilor Tony Palomba's letter for the record supportive of the ongoing negotiations to preserve 917 Belmont Street.

Vote: Jones moved to extend the demolition delay for 917 Belmont Street and additional six months, for a total of 12 months. Roach seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. November Minutes – approved.

5. 2013 HC Calendar of Meetings – approved.

6. New Business

Old Burial Grounds Signs – Hayward to meet with Bob DeRico to discuss the installation of the sign. Item will be placed on the next month Agenda.

Mt. Auburn Honor Roll Sign – Hayward reported that the sign had been restored by Tufts and Home Depot.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm