

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, April 11, 2013
Watertown Lower Hearing Room
7:00pm
Adopted July 11, 2013

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

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

Public Present: See attached Sign-In Form

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

1. Public Hearing of Landmark Designation – 917 Belmont Street

The Public Hearing is a result of the Walker School's Petition for the Historic Landmark Designation accepted by the HC last month. A Landmark Designation Report was prepared in compliance to the Landmark Ordinance.

Robert Jackson, 354 Lexington Street, expressed his appreciation for the proposed Landmarking of 917 Belmont Street. He was concerned about the continued deterioration of 917 Belmont Street and the impact on abutting property values.

Joyce Kelly, representative of the Historical Society of Watertown, said she was sad to see the loss of Section 2 of the property.

Jones hoped that the Report will have provisions to stabilize the property as fundraising goes forward. He regretted the loss of Section 2.

In response to Steele's concerns, Russo reported that the *Section VII – Demolition* allows for the petition of a demolition which will then be evaluated by the HC. The HC has the authority to reject the demolition request.

Melone was gratified that the Landmarking will require HC review to preserve and protect the main building from inappropriate changes. Russo asserted that the HC will have authority to engage in future projects and applicants. In addition, he noted that additions will only be allowed on the north side where traditionally there were additions.

Roach urged Town oversight to the activities due on the back side. Hayward noted that Ken Thompson, the Building Inspector, is aware of the project and will supervise the project. Roach noted that there was no foundation between Building 1 and 2 and that the Front Building needs to be safe and protected.

Jones was concerned about the property values of the area and hoped that the Landmarking will serve to enhance not detract from the property.

Vote: Jones moved to forward the Landmarking of 917 Belmont Street to Town Council. Berg seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. 2013 Preservation Awards

Nominations for the 2013 Preservation Awards were reviewed and the following selections were made:

Restoration of the Soldier Monument next to the Town Hall, John Spector	REM		No
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Mount Auburn Village (former First Baptist Church)	HRP	The conversion of this church has made Watertown proud. It has been recently featured in WSJ (Dec 2102) nationally and Fox News (Feb 2013) in Boston. The thoughtful preservation, tasteful and diligent design under Mr. Badrigian's directions and management had made this historic property both an exquisite and comfortable home for all the residents - and I am glad that Mr. Badrigian has the foresight to create and provide this opportunity for those of us who can be welcomed by a piece of Watertown's history when we go home every night.	No
Mount Auburn Village	APA	Brian did an excellent job. saving the church on the corner of Common Street and Mount Auburn and converting the former church into 8 beautiful, well designed condos.	No
Browne House/Historic New England	APA	The Browne House was in disrepair and Historic New England sought preservation grants to repair sensitively the roof with period wood shingles. Throughout this major repair process detail discoveries were uncovered which informed the restoration.	Yes - HRP
Yasmin Daikh	CA	For community activism which preserved 9 Hersom St. from demolition.	No
Mark Sideris	REM	For making the Council aware of the situation at 917 Belmont Street and leading the Council in taking appropriate action.	No

US Army Corps of Engineers	EPA	For working with state agencies to come up with a creative plan for restoring a wetland at the GSA site and successfully implementing the plan.	No
Tufts Health Plan	HRP	For funding the new sign at the Old Burial Ground. Contact info may not be correct; it was my best guess.	No
Carole Katz and Watertown Savings Bank	HRP	<p>In the 1970s, Watertown Savings Bank commissioned muralist Samuel Emrys Evans to create a series of paintings for the walls of the bank at 60 Main St. in Watertown Square representing Watertown's history.</p> <p>Evans (1917- 1997) was an artist for more than 40 years and a noted muralist. His murals are featured in several military installations in the Washington DC area. His paintings are found throughout the country in private and commercial collections.</p> <p>Samuel Emrys Evans used the historic photograph archive of the Watertown Free Public Library and chose nine subjects. These oversized, colorful paintings focus on historic sites, important structures and unique inventions or events from 18th , 19th , and 20th century Watertown, some that are still with us today.</p> <p>Watertown Savings Bank recently renovated the bank lobby, displacing the 4' x 8' paintings. Carole Katz, Vice President of Marketing at Watertown Savings, has admired and enjoyed these paintings during her 20 plus years of service at the bank and knew that the Watertown community felt the same way about them. She did not want them to be stored away out of sight, or worse - lost to future generations of Watertown residents and historians.</p> <p>Over the last year, Carole worked with members of the Historical Society of Watertown and Town Hall employees to get these paintings relocated in local, relevant locations or town-owned buildings.</p> <p>Most of the Evans paintings have been donated to the Town of Watertown. Two are now located in Town Hall, two are at the Coolidge School Apartments, one is in the new Police Station and one hangs in Brigham House. One remains at the Watertown Savings Bank. Two others have been donated to the Perkins School and the Gore Estate in Waltham. All buildings open to the public.</p> <p>In addition to saving these paintings of Watertown's history</p>	Yes - HRP

		<p>for future generations to enjoy, Carole came up with the idea of creating a booklet about the paintings showing the painting on one page and a description of the subject on the facing page. Members of the Historical Society of Watertown worked with Carole on the write-ups and Watertown Savings Bank funded the publication of 500 of these booklets, in color, that are now available to the public for purchase through the Historical Society of Watertown.</p>	
35 Marion Road Exterior Restoration	APA	<p>35 Marion Road was a dirty white vinyl clad house that had been neglected for over 30 years. All the architectural details had been stripped away and the shell was devoid of period elements. This restoration used wood clapboards, wood decorative shingles, decorative corbels, wood railings and moldings, and mahogany flooring on the porches and deck. A team of restoration specialists from Beasley Restoration used high end construction methods including applied period scroll work and steamed clapboards to wrap the round turret. The house is painted with six colors to create a true "painted lady" 1890 Victorian Gem. A patterned stone front walkway and landscaping to frame the property completed this restoration. Lastly, the one-of-a-kind purple rocking chairs on the front porch supply just the right touch of whimsy to passerby.</p>	Yes-APA
William McEvoy Jr.	HRP	<p>Almost single-handedly, Bill McEvoy has become a one-man Friends of Sand Bank Cemetery.</p> <p>Already a volunteer at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Bill became interested in the adjacent Mount Auburn Catholic Cemetery "known as Sand Banks" while researching local Civil War soldiers. He found at least 80 of them there and soon his concern extended to the rest of this mainly overlooked burial ground.</p> <p>Sand Banks is owned by, and receives minimal care from, the Archdiocese of Boston. The majority of the burials were from the region's early Irish immigrant families (mostly from Boston's North End) with many of the stones indicating the specific place of birth, thus providing more information than the census forms which usually state Ireland. Other ethnic groups are also represented including at least one African-American woman. Not all graves are marked and many of the monuments are weathered and in need of repair.</p> <p>Bill has taken photos of all the gravestones, posted most of</p>	Yes - HRP

		<p>them on www.FindAGrave and researched the names in the Archdiocese Archives in Boston and Braintree, in records of the Catholic Cemetery Association, at the office of the Adjutant General in Worcester, and in the Historical Society of Watertown, as well as the on-line resources of www.Ancestry.com among others.</p> <p>He has generously shared the results of this on-going project and continues to find valuable information. Perhaps this will encourage others to join in the proper care and conservation of this cemetery and enlarge the membership of Bill McEvoy's informal Friends of Sand Banks.</p>	
Joyce Kelly	CSA	For her efforts in preserving Watertown's history.	Yes- CSA
Harvey Steiner	REM	For suggesting pursuing a Historic District for 917 Belmont Street to protect it from demolition.	Yes- REM

3. March 2013 Minutes – Adopted

4. New Business

- a) **Substantial Demolition** – Russo was concerned about the major changes to the façade of the Mt. Auburn Street Dental Office. Russo wants to meet with Magoon and Hayward to discuss the status of the Substantial Demolition changes the HC had adopted and forwarded.
- b) **Comprehensive Plan** – Steele noted that 56% of the Town was built pre-1959. She was concerned about the number of Single-Family homes that have been changed to Multi-Family. She proposed that the HC have a voice in the Comprehensive Plan.

Vote: Steele recommended that a HC representative approach the Planning Department and request that a member of the HC be a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Old Business

- a) **Boston Post Cane** – On hold.
- b) **Historic Markers** – Hayward reported that the HS Graphic Arts Department is redesigning the markers.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm