

**Minutes**  
**Watertown Historical Commission**  
**Thursday,**  
**September 10, 2015**  
**Lower Hearing Room**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Historical Commission Members Present:** David J. Russo, Marilynne K. Roach, Elise Loukas, Thomas Melone, J.B. Jones, Donald S. Berg

**Member(s) Absent:** Susan Steele

**Staff Present:** Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness (adopted 10.8.15)

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Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with a description of the public hearing process for the Historical Commission (HC) by Russo.

**1) Public Hearing-Continuation - 301 Common St-Request to demolish a 1-family dwelling built in approximately 1875. Proposed is a new single family residential dwelling. Vatche Seraderian applicant/owner**

Kenneth Leitner represented the owner of 301 Common St. He passed in a set of building plans for the project and informed Russo he would be ready for a presentation at next month's meeting.

**2) Public Hearing Continuation - 79 Morse St-Request to demolish a 1-family dwelling built in approximately 1890. Proposed is a two family residential dwelling. Andrew Crawford/Torre St. Savour applicant/owner**

Mr. Leitner represented the owners of 79 Morse St. and characterized the house as having apparent structural issues but not condemnable. He reported the following events.

A visit was scheduled at the last HC meeting for commission members to walk through the house at 79 Morse St. on Monday August 24 at 7 PM. The house was visited as scheduled.

Commission members saw that architectural details have been removed. The porch was built in the 1980's and made of pressure treated materials. The insides of the home have been modernized and other than a small amount of woodwork there are no longer any significant architectural features. Over time the house lost whatever features there were that contributed to the architectural character of the building.

Loukas made note of the fact that the sides are ballooned and bowed out on this Italianate home built in around 1860-1875. She mentioned how large the property was and noticed some really large, old trees out in the back of the property.

**Public Comments: N/A**

**Commission Discussion:**

Jones stated that he saw the proposal as innocuous and mundane and that it would have little impact on the neighborhood.

Berg inquired details about the proposed building and thought the setbacks were reasonable.

Russo reminded the commission that 79 Morse St. had been found preferably preserved so what they needed to discuss now was whether or not to lift or maintain the demolition delay.

Jones asked if the owner had explored leaving the front of the house while building off of the back.

Leitner replied that it is not easy to sell a house to an owner when part of the house will need to remain. He discussed the side windows having been covered over and the aspects of stucco having been layered onto the sides of the building which would be an issue if leaving the front of the building on the proposed structure was part of the agreement.

Having considered the aspects further, Jones stated it was unfortunate that the many treatments over the years had left the house in this state. Considering the proposed plans and how they will set into the neighborhood, he thought it was appropriate to lift the delay.

**Motion:** Jones made a motion to lift the delay at 79 Morse St. Melone seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was made lifting the delay at 79 Morse St.

**3) Public Hearing-- 97 Edenfield Ave.-Request to demolish a 1-family dwelling built in approximately 1925. Proposed is a new construction duplex. Nino Compagnone, applicant/owner.**

Laura Cannon represented Nino Compagnone. She reviewed photos of the old cape style home with dormers that had been added on over time. She reviewed plot plans of the existing property and garage. She summarized that within the existing structure and photos, there were no significant architectural details here to protect.

She discussed that the new owner met with the architect and looked at the other homes in the neighborhood and worked to pull features from the surrounding homes to ensure that the new structure would set well in the neighborhood. She closed by summarizing that the new structure would be an asset to the neighborhood and would actually increase open space to the lot.

### **Public Comments**

Dean Martino the owner of 94 Edenfield St. which he called an identical house to 97 Edenfield Ave. rose to discuss how much this proposal would impact the neighborhood. He clarified that by creating a second unit in the same structure with only a single lane driveways would not allow for sufficient off street parking.

Marilyn Devaney of 90 Westminster Ave. rose to ask about the process of how the town selects which abutters are chosen. She held a conversation with the Agent who explained the process of how abutters get chosen for public hearings. He offered to show her the abutters map and the list after the meeting. He further stated that he planned to bring copies of abutter's maps and mailing lists to future meetings.

### **Public Meeting Closed**

**Motion:** Berg made a motion that 97 Edenfield Ave. was not preferably preserved. Melone seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached that 97 Edenfield Ave. was not preferably preserved.

- 4) **Public Hearing-20 Hudson St-Request to demolish a 1 family dwelling built in approximately 1927. Proposed is a new construction duplex townhouse. Judy Ribeiro, applicant/owner.**

Ari Koufos represented the owner Judy Ribeiro.

He presented the house as a 1927 Conventional home as a cape with dormers on the right side. The foundation is fieldstone and the house is on a challenging lot where the back of other houses go right into the current structure. He added that there was significant termite damage and asbestos in the current structure.

Melone recalled that the commission had approved a house for demolition directly next door recently.

### **Public Comments**

**David Ellery-127 Fayette St-**Ellery said that this was the oldest house on the street therefore the most significant. He agreed with the statements previously made about

the parking and how adding another more massive structure will only create more issues for the neighbors around parking.

**John Cimino** appeared as a member of the public to comment. He said he has worked on most of the houses if not all on this street. He said he understood why people are upset about the changes. He said that there was nothing historical about this house to preserve. He assured the public that he and the people he works with are truly seeking to improve the quality of the neighborhoods they build in.

**Motion:** Jones made a motion that the house at 20 Hudson St. was not preferably preserved. Berg seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached that 20 Hudson St. was not preferably preserved.

**5) Invitation to Comment Continued from September 10, 2015 – Proposal to locate Verizon communication antennas on the building at 462 Mt. Auburn St. – EBI Consulting.**

After discussing briefly the other 4 or 5 antennas on the building at this time, the commission declined to make comment.

**6) Old Business-**Russo informed members of the commission that Mark Sideris, Town Council President has asked that they make a recommendation to the town council to extend of the demolition delay ordinance for a period of up to two years.

**Commission Discussion**

Loukas said that a two year period would be more onerous as 1 year goes by so quickly. She was in favor of having the extra time available to the commission even if they did not need to exert the power.

Jones said that it would be wonderful to have two years to help people get a chance to do a better job with their building plans.

Russo recalled that when the commission went from 6 month delays to one year that the number of projects being reviewed by the commission went down in number.

Melone was in agreement with all ideas being expressed.

Russo suggested looking to the Comprehensive Plan recently adopted by the town for direction on preservation of the neighborhoods.

A discussion was held and language was crafted among commission members. Agent Hayward will draft up the language and submit it on behalf of the commission.

**Motion:** Loukas made a motion to increase the delay to 24 months. Jones seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached to increase the delay period up to 24 months.

**Meeting adjourned at 9 PM.**