

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday,
October 8, 2015
Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

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

Member(s) Absent: Elise Loukas

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness (adopted 11.5.15)

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. At the last meeting he passed in one set of building plans for the project and informed Russo he would be ready for a presentation at next month's meeting.

Earlier in the day, Leitner filed the required submission for the commission review but not on a timely basis. The commission members were only seeing the plans for the first time tonight.

Leitner explained that he had visited the house with the Building Inspector and that he found the house to be in beautiful condition. The new owner is planning to relocate to this home which had been abandoned over the last several years.

Leitner proposed to the commission that they find the house preferably preserved and that the owner could come back with a modified proposal for a new plan in the future.

Steele and Jones both expressed a desire to visit the site of 301 Common St. before making any decisions about the historical value of the house.

A site visit was proposed for the week of Monday, October 19th.

Motion: Jones made a motion to continue the hearing to next month. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to continue the hearing to the next month pending the site visit to occur in the meantime.

2) Public Hearing-30 Fayette St-Request to demolish one side of a 2 family dwelling built in approximately 1919. Proposed is to build a new unit to match the other side of the dwelling. Junming Gao, applicant/owner

Junming Gao, applicant and owner appeared to review his plans to demolish the 30 Fayette Street side of his house. He has already gone before planning and zoning which the plan was to tear down the 30 side to build a single structure at the 28 side. He met with the Agent and talked about the prospect of preserving the historical side of the house at 28 in the alternative.

Russo handed out photos of the house design. He pointed out that the little L coming off on the south side of the roof was from a period very early from around 1841. He expressed concern that the applicant did not seem to be treating the house in a historical way. He asked the applicant/owner if it were a possibility that he retain the saltbox roof in the design and build the remodeling around the roof.

Gao was not sure if that was something his architect could work into the plans. He agreed that he would speak with his architect.

Motion: Steele made a motion to continue the hearing while the owner confers with his architect on working the saltbox roof into the new proposed plans. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote is reached to continue the hearing to the following month.

Commission Discussion

Steele mentions that there will be a town meeting on Historical Preservation taking place on November 12, 2015 which was the next date scheduled for the Historical Commission to meet. A discussion about alternative dates takes place. It is agreed upon that the next meeting will take place on November 5th, 2015.

3) Public Hearing-51 Howard St-Request to demolish a 2 story corrugated metal building built in approximately 1960. Proposed is mixed use development for Light Industrial and office space. Coppola Real Estate Holding applicant/owner

Terry Morris, Esquire appeared for the applicant and owner of 51 Howard St. He reviewed the background of the proposed plans with the commission which he explained was in accordance with the town's desire to encourage this type of development urging contractors to replace these buildings with mixed light and industrial space to create some sub districts in the Pleasant St. corridor.

Public Comment-N/A

Commission Comments

Steele clarified that this is a mixed used development going in of three stories that is subject to site plan review. She stated that it did not seem that 51 Howard St. was preferably preserved.

Motion: Steele made a motion that 51 Howard St. is not preferably preserved. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote is reached that 51 Howard St. is not preferably preserved.

4) Public Hearing—330 Pleasant St.-Request to demolish a 2 story brick building built in approximately 1950. Proposed is a mixed use development of commercial real estate and 99 residential dwelling units. 330 Pleasant Street Realty Trust applicant/owner.

Terry Morris, Esquire appeared for the applicant and owner of 330 Pleasant St. for the petition to demolish the building erected somewhere in 1950 and he reviewed the current proposal. He clarified that 330 and 350 Pleasant St. represented two book ends of the exact same development.

He introduced Doug Anino, the architect, from Anino Associates to discuss details of the plans which were pre-schematic in form at this time. He described this plan to be a retail belt development with residential up above, up to three stories in height which would preserve the view. Because there was an effort to disguise some of the parking, there will not be a sea of visible parking, and there will be access which is perpendicular to the river yet there will be no great mass next to the river.

They just met with the Planning Department today and they got a lot of comments which they are using to refine the plans on the basis of the information they received today.

Russo inquired with the agent whether or not they would need to go before the Conservation Commission. The agent answered that they would need to do so to discuss protection of the environment around the wetlands which are in the 200 ft. buffer zone. Their project will need to add to improvements to the area in order for the commission to approve the plan.

Jones mentioned that the plans pre-suppose that some pedestrian traffic that does not exist now. Anino responded that was because developments such as this one are used to invite that new pedestrian traffic to come and frequent the area as designed.

Public Comment-N/A

Commission Discussion

Berg was in favor of the additional mixed use of the space in the proposed plans and stated it is better than what is there now.

Melone was in favor of the development.

Jones stated that he was in favor of this step in the right direction

Steele was in positive agreement with the project.

Roach was also in positive agreement with the project.

Motion: Berg made a motion that 330 Pleasant St is not preferably preserved. Jones seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that 330 Pleasant St. was not preferably preserved.

- 5) Public Hearing-350 Pleasant St-Request to demolish a 1 story brick building built in approximately 1950. Proposed is mixed use development consisting of commercial retail and 99 residential units. 340 Pleasant Street Realty, LLC applicant/owner.**

Terry Morris, Esq. appeared for the owner/applicant of 350 Pleasant St.

Public Comment-N/A

Commission Discussion

Motion: Berg made a motion that 350 Pleasant St. is not preferably preserved. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote is reached that 350 Pleasant St. is not preferably preserved.

- 6) Invitation to Comment – Proposal to locate T-Mobile USA communication antennas on the building at 125 Walnut St. – EBI Consulting.**

After a brief discussion, commission members passed on the invitation to comment on the Proposal to locate T-Mobile USA communication antennas on the building at 125 Walnut St. by EBI Consulting.

- 7) Minutes-August 13, 2015**

Motion: Berg made a motion to adopt the minutes of August 13, 2015. Steele seconded the motion.

Motion: Roach made a motion to approve the minutes. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of August 13, 2015.

8) Minutes September 10, 2015

Motion: Jones made a motion to adopt the minutes of September 10, 2015. Roach seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of September 10, 2015.

9) Tom Melone discussed his findings on the Davenport (School Street) Delta

He has been looking around at little parks and spaces thinking that something could be done to enhance the Davenport Delta which is a park that was given to the town to be used as a public space.

He had a handout of the Friends of Strauss Park in New York, a park that had been neglected over the years. Tom knew someone who became a member of the Friends of Strauss Park and discussed the possibility of doing something similar for the Davenport Delta in Watertown. He described some of their activities to explain how the program worked.

The Preservation Clerk volunteered to scan a copy of Tom's handout and email to all Commission members in the morning.

Jones made mention of the fact that he was wondering what was happening at 917 Belmont Street and commented on whether or not the commission should put some focus on it before it slipped away.

Meeting adjourned at 9 PM.