

**Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday,
December 10, 2015
Town Council Chambers
7:00 p.m.**

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

Member(s) Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness

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 Continuance - 134 Edenfield Ave - Request to demolish a single family bungalow and garage, built in approximately 1925. Proposed is a new 2 unit townhouse. Robert Marshall, applicant/owner

Mr. Marshall appeared and thanked the commission for HC members for attending a site visit. His mom has passed away recently and he met Cardillo who was developing at 130 Edenfield Ave. Cardillo explained to him about the HC and their process for protecting historical resources. He knew that the house was not in good condition and that it would have to come down and he wanted to pick the right builder for the job.

Anthony Cardillo appeared as the potential buyer for the house. He thanked the HC for their site visit and stated that he left the last meeting considering the concerns about his proposed plans mentioned at the November public hearing. His presentation for this meeting addressed those points of concern from the December meeting as follows.

- **The ridge of the house has been dropped by 2 feet.**
- **A full farmer's porch had been added to replace the columns which had been in the last plan to differentiate from the façade of the house on the left.**
- **The proposed plan has two driveways with ample off street parking.**
- **The second unit of the house is located in the rear which gives the appearance of a one family structure.**
- **The house has not been offered for sale to an average buyer by the current owner because it is in need of too much work in its current condition.**
- **A structural report which had been sought at the urging of the Building Inspector Ken Thompson, dated December 7, 2015 was submitted into the record and had concluded lally columns were corroded and the rubble wall showed signs of significant deterioration.**

Cardillo closed by saying that Watertown is familiar with previous work done by him in the past, that he is known by many of the neighbors who also familiar with his work and that he believes this would be another positive project for the town of Watertown.

Russo reminded the HC members that they had previously found the property preferably preserved and had entered a 12 month delay at the November meeting.

After a short discussion, Russo asked the commission to consider a vote if they felt ready.

Motion: Melone made a motion to lift the one year delay. Jones seconded the motion.

Vote: A vote of four HC members agreed to lift the delay, while 2 abstained from the vote. The vote to lift the delay was entered.

2) Public Hearing – 9 Myrtle St – Request to demolish a wood framed 2-family house built around 1900. Proposed is a new construction 2 story town house with a rear garage. Brendan Morrissey, applicant/owner

Mr. Pratt architect for the project, and Brendan Morrissey the owner of the building appeared for a public hearing. Pratt described the house as a two family structure that is a rambling two stories and covers a great deal of the lot, without being compliant with zoning. The parking is now currently visible from the street.

They were proposing a structure that is fairly consistent with the siding and architectural style of the houses in the neighborhood that will add a driveway for off street parking. The proposed plans could also be built by right in accordance with current zoning after having met with planning and zoning.

Melone had questions about demolishing one wing and rehabilitating the existing structure and a discussion ensued about the procedures. Pratt explained that the owner had an interest in having one single structure rather than trying to piece together different structures. Pratt also explained that they did not want to put the house on the market and try to find a new owner who may feel that the myriad issues may not be something the average buyer would want to deal with. Berg discussed with Pratt that owners do exist who would want to buy and rehab a house just like this one.

Morrissey disclosed that there were issues with the fieldstone foundation which he had attempted to correct over the years but had not had it documented by an expert.

Public Hearing

Brian Green-25 Myrtle-He had nothing to say he was just attending because he lived in the neighborhood.

Commission Discussion

Steele was upset to see the house not get a second chance at a new life. She said the house has all the problems old houses do but it has a certain character in a simple way. She was not convinced that demolition was the best idea. The proposed plans she felt lacked detail that would give the new house the beauty as it was a big house, in the shape of a square. She wanted a site visit before making a determination.

Loukas said it would help a lot to see the inside and would find it preferably preserved without further information.

Russo read some historical information about the house into the record.

Motion: A motion was made by Loukas to continue the public hearing to next month. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to continue the public hearing.

3) Public Hearing – 297 Waverley Ave - Request to demolish a single-family colonial house built around 1880. Proposed is a new construction 2 family town house. Robert LeBlanc, applicant/owner

Robert LeBlanc, applicant and owner appeared before the HC for a public hearing. This home had not been placed on the MLS in order to sell it as the original plan had been to renovate and preserve what is currently there.

He reviewed his proposed plans and discussed his plan was to replace the current structure with something that the town thought was nice.

Loukas questioned LeBlanc about keeping the front of the building and keeping the back. Berg discussed building onto the side of the building and tying it into the porch. Jones said that he could see the effort that went into the plans.

Public Hearing

John Luther-307 Waverly Ave. He felt that it was sad to see another single family house going and said he was very interested in the open space of the lot. He stated that a traditional two family home concept is one house on top of the other and not building side by side.

Ramona Borthwick-301 Waverly Ave. She shared the open space with the former owner of the house and took care of the beautiful grape vines. She hoped that the vegetation in the house would be considered because it was a home for many insects and birds as well.

Russo read a history of the building into the record.

Commission Discussion

Jones stated that he thought what the owner is trying to do here is not doing any violence to the neighborhood. Melone thought it was a good plan.

Russo liked the integrity of what was already there.

Loukas thought there was a lot of potential there and wanted to work with the owner to make some of what is there work.

Russo agreed he liked what was proposed.

Motion: A motion was made by Loukas that the house was preferably preserved. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house was preferably preserved.

Motion: Loukas made a motion to impose a 3 month delay and asked the applicants to come back before March for a public hearing. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that a 3 month delay is imposed with an invitation for the applicant to return for an additional public hearing before March 2016.

4) Minutes – November 5, 2015

The minutes of November 5, 2015 were adopted as modified.

5) Old Business

a. Future of Branch Libraries continued discussion

The Agent informs the HC that Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning has agreed to attend a site visit on Tuesday December 15, 2015 with HC.

Town Councilor Piccirilli recommends viewing the East Branch for starters.

6) New Business

HC will review the proposed meeting schedule over the holidays and will discuss and adopt an official schedule at next month's meeting.