

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday,
May 12, 2016
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

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

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 – 11 Molloy St.** to consider the demolition permit application submitted for a wood frame single family residence with a single story attached garage, built in approximately 1842. Proposed is a new 2 family townhouse style dwelling with an attached garage. Kenneth J. Leitner Jr., Applicant representative, Michael A. Boris-Owner

Leitner explained that the original home was built in 1841 or 1842. He said that the same family has been well served by the home for 75 years. He described the proposed plan to be built as the same design as 9 Molloy St.

Commission Discussion

Melone was wondering if the owner lived on the premises and Leitner responded yes.

Jones and Russo were wondering if they would consider building an addition or attaching a wing off of one side.

Roach pointed out that it was a workers neighborhood where mostly the Irish settled.

Jones remarked that it was a modest old house that has been buried underneath the additions. He also said it would have been a nice challenge for an architect to build back into its' original form.

Berg mentioned that a workers needs in 1842 were substantially different than a family of today.

Motion: Melone made a motion that the house at 11 Molloy St. was Preferably Preserved. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A 6 to 1 vote was reached that the house was Preferably Preserved.

Motion: Steele made a motion that no delay should be imposed on 11 Molloy St. Berg seconded the motion.

Vote: A six to one vote was reach that no delay should be imposed.

- 2) **Public Hearing – 40 California St.** to consider the demolition permit application submitted for a single family bungalow style house built in around 1935. Proposed are two residential town houses. Kamel Alhady, Applicant representative, Madeline Jay-Owner

Alhady stated that the original house was built in 1935 and no longer seemed to fit into the neighborhood. He urged that this project would blend in with the other 2 families on the street. He also pointed out that the lot coverage will be smaller because the garage will be demolished.

Public Comment

Laura Rice of 40 California St. said that the house as it is does not fit into the neighborhood.

Commission Discussion

Loukas said this house looks small as it is now.

Melone said it looked like a nice little bungalow someone just stuck in an empty lot.

Motion: Jones made a motion that the house at 40 California St. is Not Preferably Preserved. Melone seconded the motion.

Vote: A six to one vote was reached that the house at 40 California Street was Not Preferably Preserved.

- 3) **Public Hearing – 59 Wilson Ave.** to consider the demolition permit application submitted for a single family split level with an attached garage built in approximately 1958. Proposed are two attached town house style units with surface parking. Kenneth J. Leitner, Applicant representative, Kenneth Gagnon-Owner

After Leitner presented the project, Russo remarked that the house had a lot of the original shingles and that the house was not seen on the MLS.

Russo asked about renovations and remodeling. Leitner said his client wants to build new construction.

Steele said that this was a nice little ranch and it will be turned into another large two family mass. She said she was sorry to see this house go away.

Public Comments

The owner, Ken Gagnon from 59 Wilson Ave. spoke about the fact that he has been considering selling for a while. He explained that every other house on Wilson Ave. has been converted and he thinks that this is inevitable.

Commission Discussion

Jones said he felt that there was a huge pressure to get rid of these small houses and build as much as we can in place.

Melone said the problem is Zoning permits this kind of land coverage. While I would like to put a delay on this house, how can we when we are allowing the houses next door to come down to create mostly 2 families. He was reluctant on that note to want to delay the demolition.

Loukas agreed that this neighborhood has already been developed.

Motion: Berg made a motion that the house at 59 Wilson Ave. is Not Preferably Preserved. Loukas seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached that the house at 59 Wilson Ave. is Not Preferably Preserved.

4) Minutes – April 14, 2016

5) Old Business

a. HC March 7, 2016 Site Visit with Mark Comeiro, Veteran Services Officer – Follow up discussion

Mark Comeiro is going to get the purging of records being stored in the library building moving forward. He did not broach the subject at the last managers

meeting as had been planned. Hayward will reach out to him to follow up over the coming month.

b. 917 Belmont Street – Upkeep and Maintenance discussion based on language of Landmark Ordinance

Steve Magoon has not received any further information about an update on the Landmark concerns from the town lawyer. Jones inquired about who would have to contact the lawyer to find out more. Hayward explained that it would have to be Magoon. Loukas volunteered to follow up by proposing a letter to Hayward which could be sent to Magoon seeking a status on the matter with the town's lawyer.

c. REMINDER 2016 - Preservation Awards Night - May 19, 2016 7:00 PM - Commanders Mansion

HC discussed what needed to be done between now and the night of the Historical Preservation Awards Ceremony to prepare.

d. Neighborhood Photography project – David Russo

HC members are continuing to take photos, to exchange and share with one another to eventually be entered into a collection to be cataloged in the Watertown Free Public Library.