

**Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Reorganization & Regular Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2012, 7:30 PM, City Hall Library Room, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey**

I. Open Public Meeting Statement

Historic Preservation Commission Secretary Scott Bauman called the January 24, 2012, Reorganization and Regular Meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:33 PM and read the following into the record: *“This meeting has been duly advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, 10:4-6 et seq. The annual schedule of board meetings has been published in the Courier-News newspaper. In addition, copies of the notice have been posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices. This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.”*

Name, Class Designation (Term Duration)	1/24/12	2/28/12	3/27/12	4/24/12	5/22/12	6/26/12	7/24/12	8/28/12	9/18/12	10/23/12	11/27/12	12/18/12
John Favazzo / Class A (5/10/2010 - 1/1/2014)	X											
Lawrence Ferrara / Class C (1/18/2011 - 1/1/2015)	X											
Sandra Gurshman / Class B (1/18/2011 - 1/1/2015)	X											
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh / Class C (1/3/2012 - 1/1/2016)	X											
Elizabeth King / Class C (1/12/2009 - 1/1/2013)	X											
William Michelson / Class B (1/18/2011 - 1/1/2015)	X											
David Westlake / Class A (1/12/2009 - 1/1/2013)	X											
Jan Jasper / Class C, Alternate #2 (3/14/2011 - 1/1/2013)	X											
VACANT (1/12/09 - 1/1/2013)	n/a											
VACANT (X/X/2012 - 1/1/2016)	n/a											
VACANT Alternate #1 (X/X/2012 - 1/1/2014)	n/a											
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton	X											
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman	X											

2012 Reorganization of the Historic Preservation Commission

- Nomination and Election of Chairperson: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to nominate Sandra Gurshman as Chairwoman for 2012, including the January 22, 2013, reorganization meeting. Ms. King seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed. HPC Secretary Scott Bauman turned the meeting over to Sandra Gurshman who thanked everyone for their confidence and called for nominations for the election of a vice chairperson.
- Nomination and Election of Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Westlake made a motion to nominate William Michelson as Vice Chairman for 2012, including the January 22, 2013, reorganization meeting. Mr. Favazzo seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.
- Appointment of Historic Preservation Commission Secretary: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to appoint Scott Bauman as the HPC Secretary for 2012, including the January 22, 2013, reorganization meeting with fees of \$25 per hour, \$100.00 per meeting, not to exceed \$1,200.00 unless authorized by resolution. Ms. King seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.
- Designation of Official Newspaper: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion designating the Courier News as the official newspaper of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission for the publication of official notices and as the official newspaper to receive notices for the purpose of the Open Public Meetings Act. Ms. King seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.
- Adoption of Procedures, Forms, and By Laws of the HPC: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion adopting the procedures, forms, and by-laws of the Plainfield HPC for 2012 as cited in the land use ordinance adopted by City Council December 2, 2002, amended through August 8, 2011. Vice Chairman Michelson seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.

6. Adoption of the 2011 Meeting Schedule: Ms. King made a motion adopting the 2012 meeting schedule, including the January 22, 2013, reorganization meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.

II. Adoption of December 13, 2011, Meeting Minutes

1. Vice Chairman Michelson made a motion to approve the December 13, 2011, meeting minutes as submitted. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

III. New Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

1. HPC 12-01; 501-511 Stelle Avenue // 900-910 Field Avenue; Block 754, Lot 6 Van Wyck Brooks Historic District / Jonathan Payumo- Applicant & Owner

Jon Payumo of 501 Stelle Avenue, Plainfield, introduced himself and explained his proposal. Mr. Payumo proposes to install a six-foot high ornamental aluminum (painted black) picket style fence in the rear yard and part of the front yard area along Field Avenue. A 6' high fence is required by ordinance because Mr. Payumo is proposing an in-ground pool in the back yard. Payumo provided the Commission with a brochure showing the fence, and a property survey showing the location of the fence and pool.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the hearing to the public for comment. Clinton Hall of 923 Beechwood Court cited concern about multiple fences in the back yards of neighboring property owners; he wanted clarification as to what type and height of fence Mr. Payumo proposes. John D. Stewart, Jr., of 308 West Eighth Street introduced himself as President of the Van Wyck Brooks Historic District. Mr. Stewart said he would object to a chain link fence, but he supports the height and type of fence being proposed by Mr. Payumo. Ruth Wright of 919 Field Avenue cited concern over the location of the fence and how it relates to her property. Mr. Payumo showed Ms. Wright on the property survey where he is proposing the fence and Ms. Wright was satisfied with Mr. Payumo's response. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Chairwoman Gurshman confirmed with Mr. Payumo that the 4' to 6' height difference in the fencing will be made via a sloped transition piece, and not an abrupt height change; Mr. Payumo agreed. There were no further questions by the Commission. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to accept the proposal as submitted; Vice Chairman Michelson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

2. HPC 12-02; Public Right Of Way in Van Wyck Brooks Historic District Van Wyck Brooks Historic District- Applicant & Owner

April Stefel of 935 Madison Avenue introduced herself to the Commission and informed them that she is representing the Van Wyck Brooks Historic District for their proposal to restore nine existing Van Wyck Brooks Historic District wayfinding/location signs, and to install five new Van Wyck Brooks Historic District wayfinding/location signs within the public right of way along Central Avenue, West 8th Street, and Field Avenue. John D. Stewart, Jr. is president of the Van Wyck Brooks Historic District and is aware that Ms. Stefel is representing the District with regards to this proposal.

The new signs will share the same dimensions and appearance as the existing signs with exception of the material which will be a composite material as opposed to mahogany. The new signs are located outside the 25 foot sight distance requirement; no signs are located within a curve in the road and all are protected by curbing. Ms. Stefel provided the Commission with a project description, an inventory of existing and proposed sign location with an accompanying map, and a drawing showing sign and mounting dimensions. The entire project is expected to begin in April and end in September, 2012.

Mr. Westlake suggested to Ms. Stefel that the Van Wyck Brooks district may wish to reconsider sinking the 4" x 4" wooden posts into concrete; Mr. Westlake recommended using gravel instead. Chairwoman Gurshman opened the hearing to the public for comment. Bernice Paglia of 124 East Seventh Street said she agreed with Mr. Westlake and related the incident with the City Hall wooden flagpole that began rotting at the base where it was submerged in concrete. Hearing no further comment, Chairwoman

Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. There were no further questions by the Commission. Vice Chairman Michelson made a motion to recommend the approval of Van Wyck Historic District signage in the right of way to the Planning Board as shown on the map and detail drawings provided by Ms. Stefel. Ms. King seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. New Business

1. Resurfacing of Watchung Avenue Between Leland Avenue and Hillside Avenue

Jacqueline Foushee, PE, CME of Remington & Vernick Engineers introduced herself as Project Engineer for the Resurfacing of Watchung Avenue between Hillside Avenue and Leland Avenue. Portions of this project lie within the Hillside Avenue, Broadway, and Netherwood Heights Historic Districts. The proposed improvements include: 1) construction of new curb and/or replacement of existing curb, 2) construction of ADA compliant curb ramps and installation of detectable warning surfaces, 3) upgrades to inlet structures and castings, and 4) resurfacing of roadway.

Ms. Foushee said she wants the Commission's input on the project before it goes out to bid; construction is proposed to begin during the summer of 2012. Ms. Foushee said she has to upgrade the inlets between Hillside and Woodland avenues, grey tinted concrete will be used for curbing, driveway aprons, and ADA compliant curb ramps. Loose slate sidewalk pieces will be replaced with slate, except where the sidewalk is crossed by a driveway.

Ms. Hunton asked if there is any bluestone curbing in the historic district areas? Ms. Foushee said yes; when asked if the bluestone curbing will be replaced with like material, Ms. Foushee replied that there is not enough bluestone curbing inventory and it is difficult to salvage. The only area where the bluestone curbing is in good shape is between Woodland Avenue and Belvidere Avenue. The Commission recommended to Ms. Foushee that the concrete for all new curbing be tinted grey- not just in the historic district area. After further discussion, the Commission agreed to communicate their concerns in writing to the Planning Board. The Planning Board is scheduled to hear this proposal as a capital improvement in February.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the hearing to the public for comment. No one from the public commented. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. There were no further questions by the Commission. Chairwoman Gurshman thanked Ms. Foushee for attending the meeting and for seeking input from the Commission early in the process.

2. 701-703 Ravine Road; Block 908, Lot 13; Netherwood Heights Historic District

Ken and Izabella Miyagawa of 701 Ravine Road introduced themselves to the Commission; Mr. & Mrs. Miyagawa bought their house two years ago and are in the process of renovating. There is a second floor balcony area that is missing balustrades and railing. A 1926 picture of the house shows the presence of a railing. Mr. Miyagawa said he wishes to install a new railing but he does not want the height of the new railing to be compliant to today's building code- he would rather install railing at a lower height- similar to what is shown in the 1926 picture. The railing and balustrades on the first floor appear to be the same type that was used on the second floor balcony.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked if there were any "ghost marks" of evidence of the location and height of the second story railing; Mr. Miyagawa said there is no evidence of the railing at all. Ms. Hunton explained that since there is a doorway leading to the second floor balcony area, the Construction Official will most likely not accept a railing height less than what the code allows, there are ways to utilize shorter balustrades while maintaining a regular, code-approved top rail height. Mr. & Mrs. Miyagawa said they would research their house a little more, analyze the 1926 photograph, and come back to the Commission with their findings.

3. **811 Third Place; Block 829, Lot 19; Crescent Area Historic District**

Realtor John Campbell, Jr. of 967 Park Avenue, Plainfield, and contractor Steve Loizou of Grecco Construction, 235 Hudson Street, Hoboken, introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that last week he received a complaint about work being done to the front porch of 811 Third Place without approvals or permits. Mr. Bauman met with Mr. Campbell on site on January 20 to discuss the work that was done without approval. At the conclusion of the inspection, Mr. Bauman took pictures and recommended to Mr. Campbell that he attend the January 24 Commission meeting.

Mr. Campbell explained to the Commission that he visited with Les Graham of the Building Department and Mr. Graham informed him that permits were not needed for the work proposed for the front porch. Messrs. Campbell and Loizou discussed with the Commission the work that was already performed, and the work that is proposed; specifically the front porch railing and balustrades that were removed before work was halted. Mr. Loizou proposes to replace the railing and balustrades, as well as repairing 6 pieces of tongue and groove porch ceiling, relining the built in gutters, and repairing aluminum siding.

A discussion ensued over the balustrades that were removed from the porch and the practicality of reproducing 30 to 50 replacement balustrades. The porch floor is in fair condition, the soffits need replacement as well. Even though this was an informal hearing, Chairwoman Gurshman opened the hearing to the public for comment. No one from the public commented. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. In closing, Chairwoman Gurshman told Messrs. Campbell and Loizou that if they can use the original balustrades, or reproduce new ones with the same design as the original, and repair the built in gutters, and replace the tongue and groove porch ceiling boards with like material, a formal hearing is not required. However, if like materials or design is not possible, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be required; Mr. Bauman will follow up with Mr. Campbell.

4. **Adoption of the 2011 Year End Report for the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission**

The Commission reviewed the report and requested additions and changes; Mr. Bauman prepared the report and agreed to revise the report and provide the Commission with a new version at the February meeting.

5. **State & National Register Nomination for the George A. Strong Residence- 1030 Central Avenue**

On January 10, 2012, the State Historic Preservation Office provided Mayor Sharon Robinson Briggs, and HPC Secretary Mr. Bauman with copies of the New Jersey and National Register nomination for the George A. Strong Residence, now the duCret School of Art, located at 1030 Central Avenue. The 60 day comment period to the Historic Preservation Office expires on March 9, 2012. Ms. Turner said she had already read the nomination application; Mr. Bauman said since he only has one copy, that copy will be made available for the Commission and the public to review. After discussion, the Commission agreed to send a letter of support to the State Historic Preservation Office- Mr. Bauman agreed to draft the letter and have Chairwoman Gurshman and Ms. Hunton review it for clarity.

6. **117-125 North Avenue, Block 315, Lot 2.01; North Avenue Historic District**

Mr. Bauman provided the Commission with an update on the selective demolition of portions of the fire damaged structure at 117-125 North Avenue. Demolition work is occurring at the rear of the building- it is the intent to preserve the building façade. The Planning Division is working closely with the Building Department and Inspections Division on this project, and the Planning Division will keep the Historic Preservation Commission up to date on progress made on the demolition and rehabilitation of the structure.

V. Unfinished Business

Commission members discussed the need for the City to update the Certificate of Compliance indicating that certain properties are in historic districts. Chairwoman Gurshman requested a meeting with Inspections Division Director Oscar Turk, and Public Works Director Eric Jackson. The purpose of updating the Certificate of Compliance is to inform a potential buyer that the property under consideration may be a designated local historic landmark, or may be part of a historic district.

IX. Staff Report

Mr. Bauman provided the Commission with an update on the properties in historic districts and historic sites with code and / or maintenance violations.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Ms. King, all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP
Principal Planner / HPC Secretary
Plainfield Planning Division
Prepared: February 3, 2012, Revised February 7, 2012
HPC Approved: February 28, 2012