



**CITY OF PLAINFIELD**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, ROOM 202  
 PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060



Sharon Robinson-Briggs, Mayor

Sandra Gurshman, Chairwoman  
 John Favazzo, Vice Chairman

**Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**June 25, 2013, 7:30 PM, City Hall Library, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey**

Name, Class Designation (Term Duration)	1/22/13	2/26/13	3/19/13	4/23/13	5/28/13	6/25/13	7/23/13	8/27/13	9/24/13	10/22/13	11/19/13	12/17/13
Vice Chairman John Favazzo, Class A (5/10/10 - 12/31/13)	X	X		X	X	X						
Lawrence Ferrara, Class C (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X	X	X	X	X						
James Galvin, Alternate #1, Class A (1/3/13 - 12/31/14)	X	X		X	X	X						
Bill Garrett, Class B (2/3/12 - 12/31/15)	X		X	X								
Chairwoman Sandra Gurshman, Class B (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Jan Jasper, Class C (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X	X	X	X	X							
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh, Class C (1/3/12 - 12/31/15)	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Elizabeth King, Class C (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X		X	X	X	X						
William Michelson, Class B (1/18/11 - 12/31/14)	X	X	X		X	X						
David Westlake, Class A (1/3/13 - 12/31/16)	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2-year term)												
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton		X	X	X		X						
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman	X	X	X	X	X	X						

**Call to Order and Public Notice for Regular Meeting**

Chairwoman Gurshman called the regular meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:32 PM and read the following into the record: *“This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act in that a notice was published in the Courier News on January 4, 2013, and the notice of this meeting was posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices.”*

**Adoption of May 28, 2013, Regular Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Hunton recommended one change to the minutes: page 2, New Business, #1, first paragraph, third sentence: change the word “steeple” to “tower”. Mr. Michelson made a motion to approve the 5/28/13 regular meeting minutes as amended, Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Favazzo arrived at the meeting at 7:35 PM and abstained from voting.

**Unfinished Business**

**1. HPC 12-20: 134-136 North Avenue; Block 314, Lot 8; North Avenue Historic District**

**Applicant and Owner: 134-136 North Ave., LLC**

Gabe Bailer of 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City introduced himself to the Commission as the representative of 134-136 North Ave., LLC. Mr. Bailer summarized the proposed work to the Commission: rehabilitation of building exterior (front and rear elevations), including cleaning and re-pointing of brick facade, repair and refinishing of decorative cornices, repair of stone window sills and pre-cast concrete lintels, installation of new wood-framed double

hung sash windows in existing openings, and construction of commercial storefront, per plans prepared by Jose Carballo Architecture dated January 18, 2012. The Commission approved the wood window installation on March 19, 2013, and the awnings were recently withdrawn from the application.

Mr. Galvin asked Mr. Bailer if he was sure that the lintels above the windows were pre-cast concrete because pre-cast concrete was not around until the late 1880s. Mr. Bailer said that the lintels were probably stone but they are being repaired regardless; Mr. Galvin commented that repairing pre-cast concrete and stone are two different things. Ms. Hunton asked if there are cracks in the lintels; Mr. Bailer said that there may be cracks, and if so they are going to be repaired. When asked what will be used to clean the building façade, Mr. Bailer said a detergent called “Back to Nature”.

Vice Chairman Favazzo asked Mr. Bailer to describe re-pointing the brick. Chairwoman Gurshman asked about the cornice- the pictures show that either the cornice has bad paint, or it is damaged. Mr. Bailer said he will be repainting the cornice. Mr. Michelson cited concern over the condition of the cornice; Mr. Bailer said the photographs are over 6 months old and since then the cornice has been secured.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked what was above the doors; Mr. Bailer said glass. Chairwoman Gurshman noted that the vinyl windows are still installed; Mr. Bailer acknowledged that the vinyl windows have not yet been removed but the new wood windows have been ordered and will be installed in the next few months. Ms. Gurshman asked if a new sign panel will be installed on the store front; Mr. Bailer said he hasn’t decided- it could be on the glass itself. Chairwoman Gurshman reminded Mr. Bailer that any signage proposal needs to be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked if the roof was in good shape; Mr. Bailer responded “yes”. Mr. Michelson asked about the leader running from the roof – is that for the building in question, or for the one next door- reason being the downspout is painted two colors for no good reason. Mr. Bailer said he would talk to the building manager to get the downspout one uniform color.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to grant approval of the application as amended without the fabric awnings or signage and that the cleaning and re-pointing of the brick facade must be completed in accordance with the *Plainfield Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites*, section on exterior walls and siding. Ms. King seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

## **2. HPC 12-21: 177-185 North Avenue; Block 313, Lot 12; North Avenue Historic District**

### **Applicant and Owner: 175-177 North Ave., LLC**

Gabe Bailer of 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City introduced himself as the representative of 177-185 North Ave., LLC. Mr. Bailer summarized the proposed work to the Commission: cleaning all decorative panels and brackets, repairing all pre-cast window lintel and sills, installing new wood framed double hung windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors, cleaning and repointing the brick façade, installing new wood frame / clear glass doors, installing new aluminum frame glass windows on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor storefront.

The Applicant and the Commission agreed that the proposed work was basically the same type of work proposed at 134-136 North Avenue. Three (3) doors will be on the “177” side of the building, and two (2) doors are on the “185” side of the building. Mr. Galvin asked if the window muntins on the 177 side be wide enough to disguise the dividing wall- if the dividing wall is wider than the muntin, it will not look good, and a wider muntin is not shown on the plans. Ms. Hunton said that a new window design may be needed to hide the wall divider. Mr. Galvin noted that the pictures do not match the exterior elevation plans- “existing decorative panels” shown on the plans do not exist- if they are staying “as is” then the elevation drawings are wrong. Ms. Hunton said the panels above the storefront need further consideration- she asked for suggestions by the Commission. Chairwoman Gurshman said she would like to see uniformity. Ms. Hunton said the elevation drawings are missing something- a gap in the design, a frieze, a horizontal band. Vice Chairman Favazzo said there should be a continuous line element more in keeping with the cornice. Mr. Westlake recommended the installation of a sub cornice- one for the 177 side, and one for the 185 side

of the building. Vice Chairman Favazzo agreed and added that he doubts the existing material is even salvageable. Mr. Michelson agreed and said he wants to see a horizontal element- something to even up the uneven heights.

Mr. Bailer asked if he would have to come back to the Commission. Chairwoman Gurshman said "yes". Ms. Hunton told Mr. Bailer that what the Commission is requesting is not hard- there are plenty of online resources when looking for horizontal molding- it will most likely be less expensive to go that route than to repair the mish-mosh that is already in place. Chairwoman Gurshman added that the Commission cannot approve the proposal yet because they do not know what they are approving; the Commission does have an Architectural Review Committee that can work with the Applicant in between meetings but the Commission as a whole is the only entity that can approve the plans. Mr. Galvin added that wood, Fypon, Azek, are all products that can be used- they are low maintenance as well.

Mr. Bailer asked "if we decide to do what is on the drawing, what else do we have to show?" Mr. Michelson replied "the horizontal cornice". Ms. Hunton said the existing conditions are different than what the drawings show, you have to portray accurately what you are going to do- the Commission is not asking you to restore what was historically there, the Commission is asking for a simplified element- a horizontal cornice.

After further discussion, Mr. Michelson made a motion to carry HPC 12-21 to the 7/23/13 meeting; Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

## **New Business**

### **1. HPC 13-11: Park Avenue & Watchung Avenue Undergrade Bridges MP 23.11 & MP 22.99**

#### **Plainfield Railroad Station & North Avenue Historic District / Applicant & Owner: New Jersey Transit**

Mr. Galvin recused himself from the hearing as a Commission member- he works for NJ Transit as a Chief Engineer and is representing NJ Transit to discuss the project.

Mr. James M. Galvin, PE of NJ Transit, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, introduced himself to the Commission; he is Chief Engineer of Structures for NJ Transit Rail Operations. Mr. Galvin described the proposed bridge rehabilitation work as stone masonry repair, repointing mortar joints, graffiti removal, bridge framing, footing, and pier repairs. The bridges that will be rehabilitated are the ones that span over Park Avenue and Watchung Avenue.

NJ Transit began rehabbing the bridges in Plainfield in the late 1990s- 8 are complete. These bridges will have the interior steel girders replaced- the outside girders- the ones that can be seen from public view- will remain the same. Mr. Galvin passed around pictures of the two bridges in their present condition. Steel repairs on the understructure will be performed- those repairs and some new framing will be the only thing seen from public view. The only changes will be to the bottom of the bridge- a structural requirement. The outside girders will be taken down, sand blasted, cleaned, and reinstalled. For the inner girders, instead of using pop rivets, bolts will be used instead- the bolts will look exactly like the rivets. Gavett Place will be closed for 6 months- the area will be used to assemble and move bridge components. Work is scheduled to begin in September 2014.

With regards to masonry rehabilitation, a conservator will be hired to monitor the progress- not a contractor. Lights that are now installed underneath the tunnel will not be reinstalled- those are city installed light fixtures and if the city wants them reinstalled, they should be done by the city. Ms. King asked if the paint color of the new bridge will remain the same; Mr. Galvin replied that it would stay the same- forest green, and the CNJ RR logo will be applied.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. Dottie Gutenkauf of 414 Randolph Road raised travel concerns- several scenarios that passengers may encounter when the bridges are being worked on. Mr. Galvin was able to answer Ms. Gutenkauf's questions.

Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Mr. Michelson made a motion to approve the proposal and to send a copy of the meeting minutes to the State Historic Preservation Office and New Jersey Transit. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously with Mr. Galvin abstaining from voting.

**2. HPC 13-10: 161-167 Crescent Avenue; Block 832, Lot 7; Crescent Area Historic District**

**Applicant & Owner: 165 Crescent, LLC**

By the Applicant's request, Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to carry HPC 13-10 to the 7/23/13 meeting; Mr. Michelson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**3. Resolution Supporting Preservation New Jersey & Renewing Membership for 2013 (\$100.00)**

Ms. King made a motion to approve a resolution renewing the Commission's membership to Preservation New Jersey for 2013; Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved and read into the record:

PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PRESERVATION NEW JERSEY

WHEREAS, Preservation New Jersey promotes and protects historic resources, communities and landscapes throughout New Jersey through education and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Preservation New Jersey supports efforts to enhance the effectiveness of local preservation efforts statewide and speaks out on behalf of the preservation community on issues affecting historic preservation and increases awareness of endangered historic sites; and

WHEREAS, the City of Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission is committed and dedicated to advancing the City's historic preservation policies and objectives in the City's ten designated historic districts and nineteen designated historic sites; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2013 the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved a motion to support Preservation New Jersey by renewing the Commission's membership in the amount of \$100.00 for 2013.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission supports Preservation New Jersey, this resolution be spread upon the meeting minutes, and a copy be forwarded to Preservation New Jersey.

*The foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield at its meeting on June 25, 2013.*

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Sandra Gurshman, Chairwoman  
Historic Preservation Commission

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Scott Bauman, AICP, PP, Secretary  
Historic Preservation Commission

**4. Discussion: Removal of Center Hand Railing at the front steps of City Hall**

Chairwoman Gurshman noted that the center hand railing at the front steps of City Hall has been reinstalled; she thanked those present for being persistent to ensure that the railing was being reinstalled.

**5. Discussion: Ordinance 2012-20 Creating Transit Oriented Development Downtown (TODD Zone)**

Mr. Michelson provided the Commission with a summary of the recently approved ordinance that created TODD zones in the city's downtown central business district. Mr. Michelson said the Commission should have had the ability to review and comment on it prior to the Planning Board referring it to the City Council. Mr. Michelson said that after reading it, he had no problem with it; it opens the Central Business District (CBD) zone to a more flexible approach to uses and structures. There are standards that involve pedestrian access and streetscape design. Most of the TODD zones are outside the North Avenue Historic District. There are no changes in the ordinance that abrogate the Commission's control in the North Avenue Historic District, or the Civic Historic District. Mr. Michelson added that the City Council also recently enacted a Netherwood TODD – it comes close but is not in the Netherwood Heights Historic District.

**Committee Reports / Staff Report**

**1. Architectural Review / Minor Application Review Committee:** Work approved by the Committee (5/23/13 – 6/19/13) not requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- 5/28/13: 817 Hillside Avenue (in-kind front porch step, and porch floor board replacement)
- 6/3/13: 452 West Eighth Street (asphalt shingle roof replacement)

- The Commission discussed the work proposed at 957 Central Avenue (the Coriell Mansion)- round downspouts were approved, the owner is considering not rebuilding the solarium, which would require a CA.

**2. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee**

- A. Postcard notifying owners in historic districts / locally designated historic sites: Vice Chairman Favazzo made the post cards bigger and provided the Commission with a final draft showing the Spanish translation. Several suggestions were made and Mr. Bauman agreed to explore the different mailing options offered by the city.
- B. Spanish translation of Design Guidelines: Commission members decided to apply to the Culture and Heritage Commission for a no match grant to finance the Spanish translation of the Design Guidelines. Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that the city council resolution needed to authorize the city to apply for the grant will be before the City Council on July 15.

**3. Replacement of Green Brook Park Pedestrian Bridge- Green Brook Park Historic District**

- **Background:** In June and October 2012 the City informed Union County and the SHPO that Planning Board review and Historic Preservation Commission review are required for this project. In November the County’s consulting engineer Neglia Associates sent plans to Langan Engineering- the City’s consulting engineer- to coordinate the bridge design with the NJDEP design standards for the Green Brook Walkway. Langan Engineering reviewed the plan and provided comments in December 2012. In January 2013 HPC Consultant Gail Hunton spoke to Union County Engineering Department (Paul Leso) about Langan’s comments. The discussion focused on a wooden footbridge on sheet 29.02; the design does not meet AASHTO requirements and the County cited concerns over the durability and maintenance of timber bridges. Ms. Hunton agreed to prepare a letter for Union County citing the durability of timber bridges. In February the Commission learned that the County has all of the plans and the specifications for all of the bridges are included in the plans. The HPC was asked to make sure that the bridge locations remain the same.
- In May the County provided revised bridge plans, and in June the Commission communicated to the County the following: 1) new construction should be as close to the original structure as possible, 2) the cross bracing on the outside of the railing system is not appropriate; instead a top rail and central rail system should be utilized, 3) other than the length and deck width, there are very few design similarities which the HPC understands would be hard to duplicate due to present-day bridge standards, 4) the project must be formally submitted to the city Historic Preservation Commission for review.
- **Update:** The Commission has not heard back from the County. Chairwoman Gurshman asked Mr. Bauman to follow up with the County.

**4. Replacement of Pemberton Avenue Culvert PL-75: Cedar Brook Park Historic District**

- **Background:** Ms. Hunton heard from the State Historic Preservation Office that Union County’s consulting engineer agreed to make revisions to the culvert design- these revised plans have not yet been received by the City or the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Bauman will follow up with the County. The City and County are discussing the possibility of sharing the cost of the new culvert design by further sharing the costs associated with non-related roadway paving projects.
- **Update:** No new news.

**5. Properties in Historic Districts / Historic Sites with Code / Maintenance Violations**

- Mr. Bauman referred Commission members to the meeting packet which lists the properties of interest.

Property	Chronology
810 Central Avenue Block 760, Lot 6 Van Wyck Brooks HD Abbot Manor HPC 12-14	10/9/12: Certificate of Appropriateness issued for removal of slate roof shingles, installation of GAF Slateline shingles, repair / rebuild of roof overhangs and built in yankee gutter system, and the replacement of downspouts and leaders. 5/17/13: letter to owner requesting a status update

<b>Property</b>	<b>Chronology</b>
957-963 Central Avenue Block 759, Lot 13 Van Wyck Brooks HD Coriell Mansion ZB 04-14 HPC 04-22	May 2013: new owner informed that subject site is in a historic district
165 Crescent Avenue Block 832, Lot 7 Crescent Area HD HPC 13-10	7/23/13: Scheduled for Certificate of Appropriateness hearing for after the fact approval of previously installed vinyl windows, removal of newly installed vinyl windows, and the installation of new wood windows and new vinyl windows.
200 East Ninth Street Block 824, Lot 17 Crescent Area HD	May 2011: Fire in rear portion of house; previously boarded up 3 family. September 2011: Construction Official reports no update. February 2012: no change. 4/8/13: Inspections Division issues notice for re-securing of the rear door
340 Franklin Place Block 642, Lot 28 Crescent Area HD HPC 07-05/ ZB 10-13	October 2010: Zoning Board approved use variance October 2012: Second resolution review; awaiting Certificate of Appropriateness application 4/8/13: Inspections Division issues notice to remove graffiti and removal of trash and debris
900 Madison Avenue Block 759, Lot 1 Van Wyck Brooks HD HPC 12-06	7/13/12: Certificate of Appropriateness; requested cut sheet specifications prior to purchase of windows 5/17/13: letter to homeowner requesting a status update
134-136 North Avenue Block 314, Lot 8 North Avenue HD HPC 12-20	2/8/13: vinyl windows installed without Certificate of Appropriateness 3/19/13: HPC approves wood windows, CA issued 3/21/13; given to 6/19 to submit a schedule 6/25/13: hearing for exterior façade renovation, first floor storefront window replacement
177-185 North Avenue Block 313, Lot 12 North Avenue HD PB 13-03 / HPC 12-21	6/25/13: hearing for exterior façade renovation, first floor storefront window replacement
801-807 Park Avenue Block 828, Lot 1 Crescent Area HD HPC 10-06	5/4/11: Certificate of Appropriateness for removal of slate roof shingles, installation of Timberline shingles, gutter repair, and ridge cap replacement. 11/28/12: Dismissed without prejudice proposal for wood cornice repair 4/8/13: Inspections Division issues notice for trash removal, and to repair / replace defective sidewalks 5/20/13: letter to homeowner informing him that the 5/4/11 CA has expired
1362-1366 Randolph Road Block 13, Lot 40 Fitz Randolph House	4/26/13: Planning Division informs Inspection Division of a complaint that a window is boarded up.
850 Terrill Road Block 921, Lot 15.02 Local Historic Landmark	May 2012: For sale (\$105,000). October 2012: price reduced to \$69,000
1127 Watchung Avenue Block 638, Lot 9 Putnam-Watchung HD	4/8/13: Inspections Division issues notice for the removal of commercial vehicles and to repair and replace right and rear sides of the fence. 5/10/13: Zoning Officer issues 1 <sup>st</sup> zoning violation notice for outdoor storage of commercial vehicles 5/29/13: property owner denied Certificate of Occupancy for home occupation
1220 Watchung Avenue Block 821, Lot 26 Putnam-Watchung HD	4/8/13: Inspections Division issues notice for the front porch ceiling / lattice repair, and removal of fallen tree in rear yard
1233 Watchung Avenue Block 634, Lot 11 Putnam-Watchung HD	4/8/13: Inspections Division informs Planning Division that on 4/5/13 the homeowner pleaded guilty and paid a fine for failure to remove commercial vehicle from property
563 West Eighth Street Block 761, Lot 1 Van Wyck Brooks HD HPC 11-01 & 11-08	12/19/12: owner pleads guilty to rear door replacement and sunroom window replacement without a CA and agrees to reinstall original glass door, and replace vinyl sunroom windows with new wood frame leaded panel windows. 1/2/13: contract between owner and contractor- work to be complete by 4/13 May 2013: window replacement underway; owner requests additional time

Property	Chronology
209 West Second Street Block 245, Lot 3 Sutphen House PB 10-10	8/24/10: Planning Board referral to the HPC 9/16/10: Final approval granted; resolution compliance required. Awaiting CA application

**Adjournment of Regular Meeting**

There being no further business, Mr. Michelson made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Ms. King, all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:09 PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Scott Bauman*

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP  
Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division  
Prepared: July 16, 2013

**HPC Approved: July 23, 2013**