



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



Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor

William H. Michelson, Chairman
 Lawrence T. Quirk, Vice Chairman

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MARCH 24, 2015, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ

Call to Order and Public Notice

Chairman William Michelson called the regular meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:36 PM and in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act read aloud the following: “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 1, 2015, and the notice of this meeting was posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices.”

2015 Historic Preservation Commission Name, Class Designation (Term Ends)	1/27/15	2/24/15	3/24/15	4/28/15	5/26/15	6/23/15	7/28/15	8/25/15	9/15/15	10/27/15	11/17/15	12/15/15
John Favazzo, Class A (12/31/2017)		X	X									
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X									
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X									
Jan Jasper, Class C (12/31/2016)		X										
Elizabeth King, Class C (12/31/2016)												
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X									
Larry Quirk Class A (12/31/2017)		X	X									
Gary Schneider, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X									
Reginald Thomas, Class A (12/31/2018)		X	X									
Alternate Member #1 VACANT (2 year term)												
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2 year term)												

The January 27 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather

Presentation of February 24, 2015, Reorganization and Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to approve the February 24, 2015, Reorganization and Regular meeting minutes as presented; Ms. Gurshman seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Presentation of February 24, 2015, Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Ms. Gurshman made a motion to approve the February 24, 2015, Executive Session meeting minutes as presented; Mr. Schneider seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Status of 117-125 North Avenue; Block 315, Lot 2; North Avenue Historic District

Chairman Michelson commented that he wants to address the demolition of 117-125 North Avenue before beginning the Certificate of Appropriateness hearings that are on the meeting agenda. Chairman Michelson

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Status of 117-125 North Avenue; Block 315, Lot 2; North Avenue Historic District (continued)

commented that the HPC had no knowledge that 117-125 North Avenue required HPC attention and that he is concerned about setting a precedent. Chairman Michelson introduced Principal Planner Ms. April Stefel of the Plainfield Planning Division who has agreed to give the HPC the timeline of the recent activities that occurred leading up to the demolition of 117-125 North Avenue.

Principal Planner April Stefel of the Plainfield Planning Division introduced herself to the HPC. Ms. Stefel said on March 19, 2015, she was shown a Notice to Residents announcing the demolition of 117-125 North Avenue; she brought the notice to the attention of Planning Division Director William Nierstedt. Ms. Stefel commented that the Planning Division and the Historic Preservation Commission were not noticed of the planned demolition work and as a Certified Local Government, Plainfield is required to report such activities to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Ms. Stefel suggested to Planning Director Nierstedt that they contact the SHPO and shortly thereafter they were in contact with Andrea Tingey who informed Ms. Stefel that the city needs to file a formal request which was done that day via email. On March 20, the SHPO signed off on the demolition request.

Chairman Michelson commented that the city conducted a structural inspection of the building two months ago and it was not brought to the HPC's attention then- we need to know about such issues. Chairman Michelson said he would prepare a letter to be sent to the Mayor and Department of Public Works Director saying that steps were missed and we want to ensure that it does not happen again.

Chairman Michelson said he was on vacation while the activities leading up to the demolition took place and Vice Chairman Larry Quirk acted on his behalf. Vice Chairman Quirk told the Commission that Planning Director Nierstedt contacted him when the SHPO wanted to know what the HPC felt about the situation. Vice Chairman Quirk said he read the engineering report which was issued January 16, 2015, he doesn't understand why it not had been given to the HPC- there was time to let the Commission know what was going on- and there were meetings with one or more city officials. Chairman Quirk understands that once the engineer's report came out, those responsible should have known that the integrity of the North Avenue Historic District was threatened. Chairman Michelson commented that the underlying theme is when a property is damaged, it is hard to find someone accountable. This property was not on our radar screen, and any new construction will come before the HPC. Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public.

Councilman Cory Storch of 705 Ravine Road said at the emergency council meeting held on March 23 the focus was on procedural flaws at the communication within City Hall. Taxpayers should not pay for a private property problem. Councilman Storch asked the Commission to not send a letter yet, but to have a meeting with city officials first. The bottom line is the building needed to come down but there will be an opportunity for redevelopment. Dan Damon of 661 West Seventh Street announced that he posted on his blog a complete PDF of all correspondence, reports, letters, etc.

No one else from the public volunteered to comment; Chairman Michelson closed the public portion of the meeting and commented that there are holes in our regulatory process and he will first circulate a letter to the Commission. Vice Chairman Quirk asked Councilman Storch what department took the lead, and who hired the demolition company. Councilman Storch replied the DPW spearheaded the effort, and DPW Director Eric Watson ran the proposal to hire the demolition company past Corporation Counsel. Inspections Director Phil Izzo was involved as well.

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Unfinished Business

1. Appointment of Historic Preservation Consultant for 2015

Ms. Gurshman made a motion to appoint Mr. Barton Ross of Barton Ross & Partners, LLC Architects, 184 S. Livingston Avenue, Suite 9-140, Livingston, NJ 07039, as the City of Plainfield Historic Preservation Consultant in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00 or as appropriated by the adoption of the Calendar Year 2015 city budget. This completed the Commission's decision, in its executive session on February 24, 2015, to make this appointment.

Mr. Schneider seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote. Chairman Michelson introduced Mr. Barton Ross to the Historic Preservation Commission and the public in attendance as the city's appointed Historic Preservation Consultant- tonight is Mr. Ross' first meeting.

New Business

1. Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2015-01; 600 Belvidere Avenue; Block 906, Lot 1.

Netherwood Heights Historic District. Applicant / Owner: Cynthia Cashill.

Chairman William Michelson recused himself from the hearing since he is a property owner within 200 feet of 600 Belvidere Avenue; Vice Chairman Quirk conducted the hearing. Commission Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the applicant told him that she sent the public hearing notice to property owners within 200 feet at least 10 days prior to tonight's meeting and completed the affidavit, but she does not have the documents with her. The applicant agreed to provide a copy of the public hearing notice and the notarized affidavit to HPC Secretary Bauman and the Commission agreed to this arrangement.

Ms. Cashill introduced herself as the applicant / owner and introduced her contractor Chris Bourke of CB Construction, 7 Cambridge Drive, Milford, and her architect Frank Bell of 39 Quakertown Road, Pittstown. Mr. Bell explained the scope of the work to the Commission- the proposal is to enclose a second floor, rear elevation sunporch. The enclosure is being done with three (3) new operable 3'x5' double hung windows (12/1 muntin pattern) to match existing windows. No other exterior features will be touched. The window material is a wood composite material- not vinyl- the material does not rot or peel paint.

Vice Chairman Quirk asked about the area behind the posts- where the windows end before they wrap around the side- how will that area be treated? Mr. Bell said that area will be filled in but you will see the space in between the posts. Mr. Thomas asked if the windows are true divided light; Mr. Bourke said solid grids are on the inside, outside, and in between. Mr. Thomas requested a detail for the side panel on Sheet A-2 showing the position of the post versus the panel to show the depth of the post.

Ms. Gurshman asked if the area was once a sleeping porch, does it have the structural integrity to house laundry equipment as the area is proposed to be part of a laundry room. Mr. Bell said the area sits over heated space, there is finished flooring below, and he will provide the building inspector with their findings that the area is in good shape. Mr. Favazzo asked if the floor drain slots are being plugged; Mr. Bourke responded yes.

Vice Chairman Quirk opened the meeting to the public. William Michelson of 556 Belvidere Avenue said he has no problem with the proposal- the value of the sleeping porch aesthetically is the way it is painted. The HPC does not govern paint- he hopes that the paint scheme will be kept. Ms. Cashill said the paint scheme is being kept as it is. Vice Chairman Quirk closed the public part of the meeting.

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New Business (continued)

Mr. Ross commented that the 9/1 window pane configuration might fit better than 12/1. Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted with the condition that the applicant provide HPC Secretary Scott Bauman with a copy of the public notice and the original affidavit of service; and that the applicant submit to the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) a construction drawing showing the proposed window jamb detail located at the existing porch's wooden corner post- this drawing shall be approved by the ARC prior to the issuance of building permits. Mr. Garrett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2015-02; 177-185 North Avenue; Block 716, Lot 4.

North Avenue Historic District. 177-185 North Ave. LLC.- Applicant / Owner

HPC Secretary Bauman reported that the applicant has served notice and that the Commission has jurisdiction. Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City introduced himself as project manager representing the applicant and owner 177-185 North Ave., LLC. Mr. Bailer informed the Commission that the Planning Board approved the attic apartment on the right side (185 North Avenue) side of this two-building project. Mr. Bailer distributed to the Commission a structural integrity study obtained by a structural engineer. Mr. Bailer said the roof would be raised 2 feet; he walked the Commission through the elevation and floor plans showing where the existing roof line is located and comparing it to the new roof line. In Mr. Bailer's opinion, the raised roof will not be seen from the train station. Chairman Michelson said the raised roof would be seen from the rear of the lot. Chairman Michelson asked about the status of the work previously approved by the Commission- Mr. Bailer said the work is very close to being finished. Chairman Michelson said he wants as-built plans filed with the Planning Division.

Mr. Thomas cited light / ventilation / egress concerns- there is no responsibility taken with the plans submitted with red marker- that person should come to us with a drawing that is professionally signed and sealed. Mr. Bailer said he could get the red-ink marked plans signed and sealed by a licensed engineer. Mr. Thomas asked if the bricks on the side of the building would match the old bricks; Mr. Bailer said yes. Mr. Thomas asked about window treatments on the side- Mr. Bailer said there would be two new windows. Chairman Michelson asked what the windows are made of, Mr. Bailer said the windows would be wood, double hung. Mr. Favazzo said a lot more windows or dormers are needed to make the space habitable- we can't make judgement on something that cannot be approved as submitted. Ms. Gurshman said the Planning Board resolution states the apartment will be a studio- not a one-bedroom unit.

Mr. Thomas commented that there are not enough windows- the Building Department will deny the plans as shown- the applicant is showing something that is not real- it has nothing to do with the Construction Official. Every room that is habitable requires a window and the plans do not show enough windows. Chairman Michelson added that the applicant is changing all four elevations of the building but the plans do not show each elevation. Mr. Favazzo agreed with Mr. Thomas adding that the applicant should prepare a table for each room providing the light and air calculations; Mr. Favazzo said that as an architect the plan before the Commission is not real- it is like a cocktail napkin sketch. The Commission should be able to review sealed drawings showing all elevations and windows. Mr. Schneider added that the applicant will not be able to match the old brick and mortar- it will look different. Mr. Bailer said they would match as close as possible. Mr. Schneider commented that that there are too many unknowns in order for us to move ahead.

Vice Chairman Quirk asked Mr. Bailer where the water is going on sheet A-3- it would be helpful knowing where the drains are leading.

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New Business (continued)

Mr. Bailer asked the Commission what they want; the Commission said 1) front, back and east side elevations; 2) drainage system, 3) windows- size, material, and location; 4) brick- size and color.

Mr. Ross asked why the existing rafters should have to stay- it could be a good location for a roof garden. Regarding the proposed addition, Sections 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards state that one may want to choose a modern, more differentiated material so it stands out rather than blending in the addition with the existing building.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. On a motion made by Vice Chairman Quirk, seconded by Mr. Schneider, the Commission agreed to carry the application to April 28, 2015- no further public notice is required. The motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. Referral from the Board of Adjustment (ZB 2015-16), and Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2015-03 710 Belvidere Ave; Block 903, Lot 2. Netherwood Heights Historic District. Otis Coney- Applicant / Owner HPC Secretary Bauman reported that the applicant has served notice and that the Commission has jurisdiction. Mr. John Sullivan introduced himself as the attorney for the applicant / owner. Mr. Sullivan is a partner in the law firm of Vastola, Fackelman & Sullivan located at 495 Union Ave, Middlesex. Mr. Sullivan introduced the applicant's architect George Sincox of 414 1st Street, Westfield.

Mr. Sincox said there was a house fire and the remains were unable to be secured- what remained of the house was demolished and removed from the property. The owner wants to use the existing foundation and a small 30 square foot addition. Variances from minimum lot size and setbacks are required- that is being heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on April 1. Mr. Sincox said the setbacks of nearby houses are about the same as what the applicant is proposing.

Chairman Michelson said the subject site was part of a large property that was subdivided in the 1970s – six lots were subdivided and six split levels were built- this is a classic case for reclaiming properties where something inappropriate was done. Chairman Michelson added “because of upzoning in the 2002 Land Use Ordinance, it is not even certain if anything can be built on this lot.”

Mr. Sincox described the different types of historic styles and architecture he found in the neighborhood. Mr. Sincox displayed a picture board showing six different houses in the neighborhood- he and the Commission went over the styles, textures, color, and size of each house. Ms. Gurshman asked if a bi-level design is necessary, if not a colonial style would match at least one side of the street; Mr. Sincox said a bi-level design is not necessary.

Mr. Favazzo said the plan drawings do not match the color rendering. There is a lack of continuity with the sunk-in lower floor; if the applicant could change the design so it is not a split level. There is not enough depth on the second floor, not enough eaves either. Adding overhang brackets, and defining the building a little bit more is recommended. A Tudor-esque style is not unreasonable.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public. Dan Crigler of 609 Belvidere Avenue said the Board does not have the right to dictate a style- the applicant came up with a Tudor style and that is acceptable. Jim Spear of 609 Belvidere Avenue introduced himself as speaking as a resident, and not as a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Spear said the applicant should attempt to fit in with the

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New Business (continued)

houses around it- the house that is being proposed will match with the neighborhood. There being no further public comment, Chairman Michelson closed the public portion of the meeting.

Chairman Michelson suggested that the Commission carry the application and to ask the Zoning Board to wait before conducting their own hearings. Ms. Gurshman made a motion to carry the application to April 28, 2015, and to request that the Zoning Board delay their hearing. Mr. Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

4. Presentation of the 2014 Year End Report of the Activities of the Historic Preservation Commission
Mr. Schneider made a motion to accept the report as submitted and to forward copies to the Mayor, Plainfield City Council, and Planning Board. Ms. Gurshman seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Discussion

1. Spanish Translation of the *Design Guidelines for Historic Districts & Sites*- Carried to April 28, 2015
2. Update on the status of the Historic Preservation Commission website
Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that the website is back up and running and he informed the IT Department that when the city is ready to revamp the city's website they should contact Mr. Bauman to ensure that the content of the Commission's website can be uploaded to the city's newly configured website.

Reports

1. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee
Those present discussed the possibility of presenting historic preservation awards in 2015. Mr. Favazzo said there should be categories for buildings, people, and for historic preservation efforts (documentaries, archiving, etc.). The evaluation criteria should be in writing, and the program should encourage small contributions as well as large. The nomination process should be public- this is a good opportunity for promoting positive public policy for historic preservation.
2. Ordinance Revision Committee
Chairman Michelson and Vice Chairman Quirk agreed to meet to review the ordinance in preparation for the Planning Board plans begins the process of updating the Land Use Ordinance.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Gurshman made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Schneider; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: April 21, 2015

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission: April 28, 2015