



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
SEPTEMBER 15, 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 7:33 P.M. 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	X		X		X	X			
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X				X	X	X			
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Jan Jasper, Class C (12/31/2016)		X		X			X	X	X			
Elizabeth King, Class C (12/31/2016)				X				X	X			
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Lawrence Quirk, Class A (12/31/2017)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Gary Schneider, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X	X			X	X	X			
Reginald Thomas, Class A (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X		X	X			
Alternate Member #1 VACANT (2 year term)												
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2 year term)												

*The January 27 and May 26 meetings were cancelled.
 Also present: HPC Consultant Barton Ross, HPC Recording Secretary Scott Bauman*

Presentation of August 25, 2015, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Bauman requested that the meeting minutes be carried to the October 27, 2015, meeting.

Unfinished Business

1. Carried Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

A. HPC 2015-12: 825 Hillside Avenue; Block 630, Lot 22; Putnam Watchung Historic District

Donnell Howard- Applicant / Owner

Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that he received a phone call from Mr. Howard and he requested that the application be carried to the October meeting- he is searching for a new contractor to take on his

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proposal. Commissioner Gurshman made a motion to carry application HPC 2015-12 to the October 27, 2015, meeting; Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

B. HPC 2015-15: 516 West Sixth Street; Block 768, Lot 13; NJ & National Register of Historic Places
St. Mary's Catholic Church - Applicant and Owner

The applicant / owner was not present; Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that he sent the applicant / owner the meeting agenda. Without further discussion, Commissioner King made a motion to carry application HPC 2015-15 to the October 27, 2015, meeting; Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

New Business

1. New Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

A. HPC 2015-22: 601 Belvidere Avenue; Block 911, Lot 4; Netherwood Heights Historic District

Dr. Mary Wacholtz - Applicant and Owner

Chairman Michelson recused himself from the hearing since he is a property owner within 200 feet of 601 Belvidere Avenue; Vice Chairman Quirk managed the hearing. Commissioner Jasper arrived at 7:38 pm.

Dr. Wacholtz of 601 Belvidere Avenue introduced herself to the Commission. Mr. Mohammed Younes of 1021 Park Land introduced himself to the Commission as Dr. Wacholtz's contractor. Dr. Wacholtz said her proposal is to replace the stairs, landing, lattice and railing at the mudroom entrance (Park Lane side of the house). Dr. Wacholtz provided pictures of her house showing the existing landing, stairs, and railing.

Commission members reviewed a site survey prepared by Frederick C. Losowski which was submitted as part of the application. Dr. Wacholtz said the decking and fascia board will be made of Trex "Transcend Lava Rock" and be constructed as per the submitted drawings. Dr. Wacholtz provided material samples of the Trex products to the Commission.

Dr. Wacholtz said that the new stair handrail will be located on either side of the stair and will be made of black colored wrought iron or aluminum. The wood lattice work will be painted and installed on either side of the stair and enclose the underside of the porch. Mr. Younes explained where the new handrails will be located and how they will come down along the edge of the cascading steps.

Commissioner Favazzo asked if the present porch is original to the house or if it is a replacement; Mr. Younes said that the porch is a 1980s replacement made of treated lumber. Commissioner Thomas confirmed with Mr. Younes that there will be brown lattice work on the exposed sides of the stairs.

Vice Chairman Quirk opened the meeting to the public; William Michelson of 556 Belvidere Avenue said he has no objection to the proposal; Mr. Michelson added that the proposal is not exactly like a porch but more like an outside landing leading to a vestibule. Vice Chairman Quirk closed the public portion of the meeting.

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Commissioner King made a motion to approve HPC 2015-22, 601 Belvidere Avenue as submitted; Commissioner Garrett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

2. 2015 Historic Preservation Awards

Chairman Michelson informed the Commissioners that the last draft / completed form was in the meeting packet. Vice Chairman Quirk and Commissioner King complemented Mr. Ross on the nomination form. The Commission agreed to change the submission deadline to December 31, 2015. The Commission agreed to post the nomination form on the HPC's Facebook page, the historic districts that have websites, provide copies to the local bloggers, have copies available in City Hall, the public library, and other high profile public places.

Discussion

1. New Historic Districts or the Possible Expansion of Existing Historic Districts

Chairman Michelson provided Commissioners with a map of the Netherwood Heights Historic Districts containing his suggestions for district expansion; the proposed district would be expanded from 89 homes to 176 and will aim at preserving streetscapes. Chairman Michelson said that the existing bulk requirements for the Netherwood Heights Historic District should be reviewed as well if and when an expansion of the district is considered. Chairman Michelson added that he shared his ideas with the Netherwood Heights Historic District Board meeting- he is getting the word out but will do more of an elaborate presentation at a later date.

Commissioner Gurshman asked what was the initial reaction; Chairman Michelson said that many were familiar with the idea of expansion and there were a lot of new people that did not live in the district and this was the first time they were giving the idea any thought. Two people cited concern that it was a new form of regulation. Commissioner Schneider asked how the process works; Chairman Michelson said the Commission would endorse it, then goes before the Planning Board for endorsement, then to the City Council as an amendment to the Land Use Ordinance. Commissioner Schneider applauded the effort and asked if this process would have to be done every decade; Chairman Michelson said there is no time cycle in reviewing the districts. Commissioner Thomas reiterated that he would like to address the re-zoning argument so that it is pre-empted- those opposed to an expansion would be asking what is this going to cost me and the argument is it is good for you, it won't cost a dime. Commissioner King agreed with Commissioner Thomas stating that the expansion should not cause current owners any monetary or image problems. Mr. Ross added that historic designation raises property values. Vice Chairman Quirk said the proposal is good as long as the proposal doesn't move properties into more restrictive zone requirements. Commissioner Favazzo said the Commission needs to be prepared with FAQ sheets and be sure on economic statistics and crime rates. Chairman Michelson agreed to work on FAQ sheets and he asked Mr. Ross for assistance.

2. Revisions to the By-Laws of the Historic Preservation Commission

Chairman Michelson reported that he made notes on the existing by-laws; he advised that the current by-laws be scrapped. Chairman Michelson gave his notes to Vice Chairman Quirk who will now review and report back to Chairman Michelson.

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Reports

1. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee

Spanish Translation of Design Guidelines: No change since July when Mr. Bauman reported that there is a delay in the release of the document regarding the Acknowledgements page of the guidelines. The Commission discussed ways to remedy the situation; Chairman Michelson volunteered to reach out to Carlos Sanchez of the Economic Development Office.

2. Ordinance Revision Committee

No update to report.

3. Architectural Review Committee

The Commission discussed work proposed at 1320 Watchung Avenue, 130 North Avenue, and 525 Park Avenue.

Proposed Outsourcing of the Plainfield Planning Division

Chairman Michelson provided the Commission with a brief background on the matter- on October 5, 2015, the Administration is requesting from City Council that the Planning Division layoff plan be scheduled at their regular meeting of October 13, 2015. The reasons given for the layoff are economy and efficiency. Chairman Michelson circulated a letter to the Mayor and Council, on HPC letterhead opposing the layoff plan. After further discussion, Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to accept a revised letter composed by Chairman Michelson expressing the Historic Preservation Commission's strong opposition to outsourcing the Planning Division; Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Gurshman made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner King; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: October 9, 2015

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission: October 27, 2015