



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
OCTOBER 27, 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 7:30 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	X		
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X				X	X	X	X		
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	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	X		
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Lawrence Quirk, Class A (12/31/2017)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Gary Schneider, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		
Reginald Thomas, Class A (12/31/2018)		X	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

Commissioner Gurshman made a motion to accept the August 25, 2015, meeting minutes as presented; Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Presentation of September 15, 2015, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner King made a motion to accept the September 15, 2015, meeting minutes as presented; Commissioner Gurshman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

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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 Mr. Howard would like to withdraw his application. Commissioner Chairman Michelson dismissed the application without prejudice.

**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**

Father Manoel Oliveira of St Mary's Church, 516 West Sixth Street, and Mr. Raj Sookhu, a CAD Designer for Crane Associates, PC, of 313 East Main Street, Somerville, introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Sookhu informed the Commission that the church is proposing to install a new ground sign on the church's property at the northwest corner of Liberty Street and West Sixth Street.

Mr. Sookhu described the sign material, design, dimension, and location. The sign will be made of masonry and marble; the sign will be one-sided and will be angled facing Liberty Street and West Sixth Street for maximum exposure. Commissioner Garrett entered the meeting at 7:34 pm

Vice Chairman Quirk asked if the sign would be illuminated; Mr. Sookhu said the sign would not be illuminated. Vice Chairman Quirk asked how far the sign would be from the front yard property line; Mr. Sookhu said the sign would be at least 10 feet from the front yard property line. Commissioner Gurshman asked Mr. Bauman if the proposed ground sign meets the city's sign ordinance; Mr. Bauman said the sign does comply with the city sign ordinance.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented and Chairman Michelson closed the public portion of the meeting. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to approve HPC 2015-15, 516 West Sixth Street as submitted; Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

New Business

1. New Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

**A. HPC 2015-23: 518 Watchung Avenue; Block 835, Lot 4; Civic Historic District
Plainfield Genesis Affordable Housing- Applicant. Greater Plainfield YMCA- Owner**

Mr. Bauman announced that the applicant served proper hearing notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Commissioner Thomas recused himself from the hearing. Attorney for the applicant John Sullivan of the law firm Vastola, Fackelman & Sullivan of 495 Union Avenue, Middlesex, NJ, introduced himself to the Commission and informed them that his applicant proposed to convert 60 transient guest rooms to 30 studio apartments. Dan Nichols and Rick Ragan of 30 Jackson Road, Medford, NJ, introduced themselves as architects for the applicant. Hans Lampart introduced himself as President and CEO of Eastern Pacific Development Corporation, LLC of 1873 Brookfield Street, Vineland, NJ.

Mr. Nichols narrated the proposal to the Commission: the building addition will be most visible on the East Sixth Street elevation. Sheet A201 shows an elevation drawing of the proposed addition. New fire stairs and an elevator tower will provide access to the upper floors. The color of the building will be maintained- new stucco will harmonize with the existing building. Mr. Nichols provided three (3)

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stucco samples to the Commission. Mr. Schneider asked why not brick instead of stucco; Mr. Lampart said they do not want the addition to match the existing building, there is a precedent for stucco on the building, and the stucco colors will match the building. Commissioner Garrett asked if the proposal would affect the inside track; Mr. Lampart responded by saying the proposal would not affect the running track inside the building.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to approve Certificate of Appropriateness Application 2015-23 to renovate the second and third floors of the building, and construct a building addition to convert 60 transient guest rooms to 30 studio apartments; the exterior look of the building will be as indicated in plans submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission, and furthermore the Commission has no objections to report to the Planning Board, as the proposal is scheduled before the Planning Board on November 5, 2015. Commissioner Gurshman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**B. HPC 2015-24: 919 Madison Avenue; Block 758, Lot 29; Van Wyck Brooks Historic District
Quelhas Construction Group, LLC- Applicant & Owner**

Mr. Bauman announced that the applicant served proper hearing notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Antonio Quelhas of 919 Madison Avenue introduced himself as the property owner and contractor. Mr. Quelhas informed the Commission that he is proposing to re-face the front brick steps with marble tiles, install iron guardrails on the front steps, remove an asphalt area at the driveway apron and replace it with concrete and grass, after-the-fact approval for the installation of a new 6 foot high wood stockade fence, install a new wood deck at the rear of the house, install a new front wooden door, and replace cedar shingle siding at the second floor facing south to match existing cedar shingle siding.

When asked why the brick steps need resurfacing, Mr. Quelhas said the house is gray in color, and new gray marble tiles will allow the steps to match the rest of the house. With the new front door, a walkway to the new steps, and the addition of iron handrails and planter boxes, the entranceway will have a new cozy feel. Chairman Michelson asked Mr. Quelhas what the steps looked like when he bought the house; Mr. Quelhas replied that the steps were brick, in need of repair, and pitched incorrectly- water flowed into the front door area. When asked why he installed the fence without Commission approval, Mr. Quelhas said he was unaware that the property was in a historic district when he bought it. Chairman Michelson noted that since the fence will block the public view of the rear deck which the applicant wants to build, the deck does not require Commission approval.

Vice Chairman Quirk informed the Commission that he previously met Mr. Quelhas when he was installing the marble tiles; Vice Chairman Quirk told Mr. Quelhas that he thought the tiles were going to be removed, Mr. Quelhas said he had changed his mind. When asked if the tiles were slippery, Mr. Quelhas said there is a certain degree of roughness to each tile. Vice Chairman Quirk confirmed the type of iron railing proposed as well as the proposed asphalt removal near the driveway apron / sidewalk area. When asked whether the new front door will be painted or stained, Mr. Quelhas replied the door would be stained.

Concerning the proposed work along the sidewalk / driveway apron, HPC Secretary Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that the asphalt area is not part of Mr. Quelhas' property- it belongs to the

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owner of adjacent Lot 28 and without approval from the neighbor, this part of the proposal cannot be decided by the Commission at this time. Mr. Quelhas said he was unaware of the location of the proposed work and he will speak to his neighbor about his proposal.

Commissioner Favazzo asked if the tile steps would have a cleft finish; Mr. Quelhas said yes, Commissioner Favazzo said with a cleft finish the steps would have an overall modern look, which is inappropriate for the house. Commissioner Favazzo also questioned the ratio of riser to tread, and whether the proposal would pass inspection by the Building Department.

HPC Consultant Mr. Ross suggested that the applicant re-draw the steps and return to the Commission at a later date. Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to bifurcate the application and carry the portion of the application pertaining to the re-facing of the front steps, installation of iron guardrails, and driveway paving to the November 17, 2015, meeting, and approve the following work: installation of a 4'-0" and 6'-0" high wooden stockade fence per presented cut sheets and as notated on the submitted site plan drawing (page 24 of the application) in purple color, and the replacement of the front door per the submitted cut sheet (page 7 of the application). Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**C. HPC 2015-25: 1217 Putnam Avenue; Block 636, Lot 22; Putnam Watchung Historic District
CDJ Construction- Applicant. Deepak Gupta- Owner**

Mr. Bauman announced that the applicant served proper hearing notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Joseph Corticada of CDJ Construction PO Box 461, Elizabeth, NJ, introduced himself to the Commission and informed them that he is proposing to install wood railings to the front porch of a three-family dwelling. The Construction Official is requiring that a railing be installed since this a multi-family dwelling. The Commission and Mr. Corticada discussed several different designs including a double top rail, and the addition of pilaster caps. None of the proposals discussed met the satisfaction of the Commission.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Commissioner Favazzo made a motion to carry the proposal to November 17; between now and the November meeting the applicant is to provide new details for a railing, including photographs, measurements, and confirmation of code requirements. Commissioner Gurshman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**D. HPC 2015-26: 947 Madison Avenue; Block 758, Lot 12; Van Wyck Brooks Historic District
Steven Baffoni- Applicant & Owner**

Mr. Bauman announced that the applicant served proper hearing notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Steven Baffoni of 947 Madison Avenue, Plainfield, introduced himself to the Commission and informed them that he is proposing to install a 1.5 – 2 foot high retaining wall in the front yard, remove and replace steps from the sidewalk side of the front walkway, and replace the walkway leading to the front porch with new pavers to match driveway pavers. A discussion ensued regarding the various paver colors and materials being used and the color scheme between the wall and wall cap.

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Commissioner Thomas commented on the scale of the proposal when applied to a smaller area, the driveway is considerable- the outer pavers are the same size and scale of the original walkway and the area will change considerably. Commissioner Thomas would like to see a mock-up of the proposal to ensure that the walkway does not start to look like a driveway.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to approve the installation of a 16-18” high retaining wall the length of the property in the front yard with an 18-24” setback from the sidewalk, remove and replace front porch steps with materials to match the existing driveway pavers previously installed, and replace the walkway leading to the front porch with new pavers to match the existing driveway pavers previously installed.

The Commission approved all work in accordance with the site plan drawing, photos and cut sheets as presented by the applicant. The applicant is to provide paver samples of exact color, size, and scale to be installed at the front steps for review by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), and the front retaining wall facing materials will be a primarily gray color to match the existing driveway pavers. Commissioner Garrett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

2. Application for Amended Certificate of Appropriateness

A. HPC 2014-12: 1035 Hillside Avenue; Block 816, Lot 9; Hillside Avenue Historic District

Carlos Gonzalez- Applicant & Owner

Mr. Bauman announced that the applicant served proper hearing notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Carlos Gonzalez and Amy Gonzalez of 1035 Hillside Avenue introduced themselves to the Commission. The applicant’s architect Joseph Krawiec of 409 Pierce Street, South Plainfield, introduced himself to the Commission. Chairman Michelson asked Mr. Gonzalez why the change in the proposal that the Commission approved in 2014, specifically an addition to rear of the house and modifications to garage and driveway. Mr. Gonzalez said the opportunity presented itself as construction on the addition began- including two upper floors over the addition previously approved by the Commission. It was noted by Chairman Michelson and Mr. Bauman that even with this addition, this house will fit the zoning bulk regulations and does not need any variances.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that the addition would not be higher than the house; Mr. Krawiec added that he is taking the same window pattern on the third floor and applying it to the second floor; he added that the jerkinhead peak at the front is being pulled to the end of the addition. Commissioner Thomas said that it makes sense to do any further additions now, there is no change in the building’s aesthetics- the applicant is pulling the addition forward over the already approved first floor addition.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to amend Certificate of Appropriateness application 2014-12 to permit a second and third story addition to the building, the form and look of the addition as shown on the plans prepared by Joseph Krawiec dated October 16, 2015. Commissioner Gurshman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

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Discussion

1. Plainfield Public Library Request for Support for a Certified Local Government Grant

Commissioner Gurshman recused herself from the hearing. Plainfield Public Library Director Mary Ellen Rogan of 69 Wellington Road, East Brunswick, and former Plainfield Public Library Director Joseph DaRold of 1404 Martine Avenue is requesting that the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission support the Library's quest for a Certified Local Government grant- a letter of support from the Commission is needed; the State allows only one (1) grant per municipality. The Plainfield Public Library intends to utilize grant funds from the Certified Local Government program to digitize historical blueprints of buildings in Plainfield- these plans are government records that are referred to often by researchers and historians.

HPC Consultant Mr. Ross informed the Commission that the CLG grant program is the funding avenue used to expand historic districts whereas there are other sources of funding for the Library's grant proposal. In this case, the Library is in direct competition with the Historic Preservation Commission for grant funding. After further discussion, it was apparent that the Historic Preservation Commission is planning to apply for the same CLG funding for the expansion of historic districts. Mr. Ross offered to pass along other funding sources to the Library. Mr. DaRold and Ms. Rogan thanked the Commissioners for their time.

2. State Historic Preservation Office Follow-Up to 2015 Evaluation of Plainfield's CLG Status

Chairman Michelson reported that the Commission received a letter from the State Historic Preservation Office following up on their site visit in August. Overall, the Commission is doing well, there are a few items that need attention, including some work needed on the by-laws, and classes of members on the Commission- the majority of members should be Class C members. Mr. Bauman agreed to draft a response to the letter for review and approval by the Commission.

3. Proposed City Streetscape Standards

Commissioner Favazzo agreed to review the standards and report back to the Commission in November.

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

Carried to the November 17, 2015, HPC meeting.

5. 2016 Certified Local Government Grant

Mr. Ross is preparing a grant application to the State Historic Preservation Office for the expansion of the Van Wyck Brooks and Netherwood Heights Historic Districts. Vice Chairman Quirk and Chairman Michelson are working with Mr. Ross on the actual number of properties and their location so Mr. Ross has an idea of how much funding to request. The grant applications are due on January 15, 2016.

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

Carried to the November 17, 2015, HPC meeting.

7. 2015 Historic Preservation Awards

The submission deadline is 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, and have copies available in City Hall, the public library, and other high profile public places.

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Reports

1. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee

Spanish Translation of Design Guidelines: Commissioner Schneider volunteered to revise the Acknowledgements page of the guidelines; upon receipt of the revised text Mr. Bauman will present it to Carlos Sanchez of the Economic Development Office for his review.

2. Ordinance Revision Committee

No news to report.

3. Architectural Review Committee

No news to report.

Public Comment

Nancy Piwowar of 1129 Myrtle Avenue informed the Commission about the efforts being made to save the Doris Duke Mansion in Somerset County. Ms. Piwowar asked Commissioners to sign a petition, write a letter to the editor, and tell others about the efforts being made to save the mansion from demolition.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Favazzo made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner King; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: December 28, 2015

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission: January 26, 2016