



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
DECEMBER 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 7:48 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	X	
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jan Jasper, Class C (12/31/2016)		X		X			X	X	X		X	
Elizabeth King, Class C (12/31/2016)				X				X	X	X	X	X
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/2018)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lawrence Quirk, Class A (12/31/2017)		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gary Schneider, Class B (12/31/2015)		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Reginald Thomas, Class A (12/31/2018)		X	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, and HPC Recording Secretary Scott Bauman*

Presentation of October 27, 2015, & November 17, 2015, Meeting Minutes

Upon request by HPC Secretary Mr. Bauman, Commissioner King made a motion that the presentation of the October 27 and November 17, 2015 meeting minutes be carried to January 26, 2016. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

New Business

**1. Request to Amend Certificate of Appropriateness Application 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 introduced himself to the Commission. Fr. Manoel told the Commission that the air conditioning condenser unit approved by the Commission equipment is no longer available- the new condenser is slightly bigger (from 5'x5'x5' to 6'x7'x7') and now only one condenser is needed instead of two. Fr. Manoel passed around a property survey showing the new proposed location of the condenser unit.

Chairman Michelson opened the meeting to the public; seeing no members of the public requesting to comment on the application, Chairman Michelson closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

After further discussion, Commissioner Schneider made a motion to approve the undated site plan drawings M-1 and M-2 as prepared by C. Edward Coughlin Architect & Planner, and submitted at the hearing which includes the installation of HVAC equipment, including one condenser, visible from the public right-of-way and notated on the submitted site plan drawing as ACC-1. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Unfinished Business

1. Carried Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

**1. HPC 2015-28: Cedar Brook Park; Block 732, Lot 1; State & National Registered Landmark
County of Union- Applicant & Owner**

Chairman Michelson announced that no one is present representing the applicant and he provided the Commission with the following summary:

- The applicant had a hearing before the Commission last month for 2 artificial turf athletic fields, bleachers, fencing, lighting towers, and tree removal; the hearing reached a point where it could not be finished in one night and the Commission carried the application to the December meeting and the applicant consented.
- After last month's meeting, the applicant felt compelled to complain to Corporation Counsel that there was a conflict of interest with the Chairman; Corporation Counsel did not ask anybody about the nature of the case and made the mistake of saying the Commission has no jurisdiction over the application and can only give suggestions to the Planning Board. The Cedar Brook Park is a historic district and the Commission has jurisdiction by the Certificate of Appropriateness process.
- The Planning Board has a case- a capital project review; Chairman Michelson explained the capital project review process to the Commission.
- The discussions between attorneys got blown out of proportion and neither the applicant nor Corporation Counsel would talk to the Historic Preservation Commission Chairman; Corporation Counsel discussed the matter with the Planning Board attorney.
- Corporation Counsel and the Planning Board attorney concluded that the Commission does have jurisdiction and the applicant has now decided not to return to the Commission to continue the public hearing. The Commission is now expected to act on what they have been given.

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2015, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ

- Planning staff prepared a memorandum to the Planning Board about the proposal, and Chairman Michelson is planning to attend the Board meeting this Thursday night when the capital review hearing takes place.
- The purpose of the application was demonstrated to the Commission last month when the youth soccer league showed up to the meeting- soccer is important to the Hispanic community and they feel they are not being adequately accommodated by the city.
- To what extent is the county's proposal consistent with the historic qualities of Cedar Brook Park?
- Chairman Michelson asked HPC Consultant Mr. Ross to research to see if there are any historic parks with artificial turf and whether it is acceptable or not. Mr. Ross reported to Chairman Michelson that some do and others do not permit synthetic turf in Olmsted parks.

Vice Chairman Quirk said the application wasn't completed, the Commission was not done at all, and he is having difficulty contemplating a Certificate of Appropriateness- if one does not finish their presentation, how is the Commission supposed to decide- with a denial? Chairman Michelson said that the applicant continues to protest that the Commission has no jurisdiction over the proposal.

Vice Chairman Quirk said that he never heard a comment from the applicant objecting to the hearing or over jurisdictional matters- last month the applicant presented their case, they brought in experts on drainage, and only towards the end did the applicant share with the Commission the 1920s park maps. The applicant seemed poorly prepared and the Commission was not able to have a chance to assist.

Chairman Michelson said the risk the applicant is going to take is that anybody can file a court action on the grounds that the applicant did not obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness- this Commission can decide to do that as well as any private person.

Regarding the jurisdiction dispute, Chairman Michelson said the historic preservation element was added to the Municipal Land Use Law in 1985 and at that time Plainfield already had a functioning historic preservation system under local ordinance. The Municipal Land Use Law states that the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer cases to the Planning Board. The applicant thought the Commission was going beyond their power. He was overlooking that Plainfield is a special charter city and the city does not operate entirely under statutory provisions. The city has a different charter that was presented to Trenton and it was passed. The precedent can be found in the court case involving Plainfield under *Miller v. Mitchell* (245 N.J. Super. 290 (1991)). County does not trump municipality in this case. There is no provision in the city's special charter, but it does give the Commission actual decision making powers via a Certificate of Appropriateness.

HPC Consultant Mr. Ross informed the Commission that he researched lighting proposals in historic parks and found in Olmsted parks in New York and Montclair that no lights are permitted. They are considered obtrusive on trees and landscape- they detract from the aesthetics of the plantings. Additionally there is the possibility of light pollution on adjacent properties which can sometimes be historic neighborhoods onto themselves. Additionally, in some cases scoreboards are not permitted in Olmsted parks- no specialized sports fields in Olmsted Parks.

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2015, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ

Dan Damon of 661 West Seventh Street said he spoke in favor of the proposal last month. Then he went to Seidler Field and observed 70 foot tall light poles. The characteristics of the neighborhoods are the same as the Cedar Brook Park area. These light fixtures tower over trees and the neighborhood-they are an eye-catching sight. Night lighting will change the character of Cedar Brook Park and it changes the park rules which indicate the facility is open from dawn to dusk only.

Chairman Michelson said the city's lighting ordinance addresses spillover, brightness, and angle of fixtures. The Commission discussed whether the poles could be anodized black instead of an aluminum color. The Commission requested a 3D elevation drawing of the proposal and the applicant was not willing to do that.

Commissioner Schneider said on Lambert's Mill Road in Westfield there is an athletic field with 78-foot tall light poles and they light up the whole area around the park; it is going to be a globe of light at the Cedar Brook Park area; Commissioner Schneider was looking forward to seeing the 3D presentation. Regarding the synthetic turf, Commissioner Schneider said he understands that it is appropriate for drainage. The applicant's experts laid it out, but he had more questions about the turf: it breaks down, it gets contaminated. The applicant did not present enough information to make an appropriate decision.

Arne Aakre of 915 Madison Avenue asked if the Commission has purview over artificial turf if they determine the turf detracts from the atmosphere of the park. The applicant is proposing to take down trees too. The 3 or 4 houses fronting Arlington Avenue heading towards Pemberton and the houses on Cedar Court are close to the proposal- all the trees are deciduous and vegetation will not mask anything. At the Union County Vo-Tech High School on Raritan Road in Scotch Plains there is a quarter mile between lights and neighboring residences and there is light spillage onto the houses, even when the lights are directed towards the soccer field. Mr. Aakre mentioned that the side of Cedar Brook Park proposed for lighting and turf fields is also used as a picnic area and newer baseball fields and lighting would change the mood of the park and takeaway from the park's bucolic setting. Chairman Michelson said the Olmsted firm was trying to create an ambiance within the park and provide active and passive recreation- open space, meadows, and woods are important parts of the park.

Commissioner Schneider said with lighting there will be a heavy usage of electricity and where will the power units be located. There will be a buzz level emitted by the transformers. Commissioner Schneider did not see a tree replacement plan, or where the applicant proposes to build up a knoll.

Gerry Heydt of 915 Madison Avenue said the trees slated for removal were original to the park, and the proposed changes to the berms are changes to the original park. With regards to lighting, Ms. Heydt said they will be primarily used in the Fall- one or two months of the year- how much extra time will this allow the children to use the fields. There will be more adult leagues using the fields should lighting be installed.

Chairman Michelson said he has reviewed the preliminary Olmsted plan of the park dated January 1928 and he feels that they could agree on a tree mitigation plan using the 1928 plan and the input from the Shade Tree Commission. The Commission compared the 1928 park plan to where the twelve trees slated for removal are located. Other questions that remain unanswered are details about the berm shown on the contour map on Sheet 5, the type of erosion the proposal could cause, and more details about the bleachers.

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2015, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ

HPC Consultant Mr. Ross said the park is on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and if federal funds are used, a Section 106 review is required. The applicant is not present to answer these questions. Commissioner King also cited concern that the application is incomplete and the applicant is not present to answer questions that she has.

Chairman Michelson said he will prepare a letter to the Planning Board citing the Commission's concerns that will address lighting, turf, bleachers, safety netting, scoreboard, tree removal, and soil disturbance. The letter will be distributed to the Commission in draft form first before it is sent to the Planning Board Chairman. The Commission discussed numerous items which gave them concerns, and Chairman Michelson took notes from this discussion, to include in his letter.

Hearing no further comment from the public or the Commission, Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for application HPC 2015-28 without prejudice. The applicant has failed / refused to complete their factual presentation. The Commission feels strongly that more information is needed. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

New Business

2. Resolution Supporting the Submission of a No Local Match Certified Local Government Grant

Commissioner King made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Quirk, to approve the following Resolution supporting the City's submission of a Certified Local Government Grant to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office:

**PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
THE SUBMISSION OF A NO LOCAL MATCH REQUIRED GRANT APPLICATION NOT TO
EXCEED \$25,000.00 TO THE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND CERTIFIED
LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT-IN-AID 2016**

WHEREAS, the City of Plainfield is one of 45 Certified Local Governments in the state of New Jersey that is eligible to apply for no local match required grant funds from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office; and

WHEREAS the City of Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission desires to further the public interest by supporting the submission of a no local match grant from the State of New Jersey Historic Preservation Office in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 to fund the historic preservation survey for the expansion of the Netherwood Heights Historic District and the Van Wyck Brooks Historic District.

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

The foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield at its meeting on December 15, 2015.

The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

MEETING MINUTES- PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2015, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ

Discussion

1. 2015 Historic Preservation Commission Budget

HPC Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that the 2015 budget balance is \$1,625.00 and there are funds available for the 2015 Historic Preservation Awards program. After a brief discussion, Commissioner King made a motion to fund the 2015 Historic Preservation Awards program in the amount not to exceed \$400.00 for the costs related to the awards and recognition. Vice Chairman Quirk seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

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

Carried to the January 26, 2016, HPC meeting.

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

Carried to the January 26, 2016, HPC meeting.

4. 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.

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

Carried to the January 26, 2016, HPC meeting.

6. Dolbeer-Ware House; 850 Terrill Road

HPC Secretary Bauman informed the Commission that historic preservation consultant Dennis Bertland has completed the submission to the State Historic Preservation Office for the nomination of the Dolbeer-Ware House to the State and National Registers of Historic Places and he is seeking the Commission's support for him to submit the application. This is the same property that has often been referred to as Lampkin House. Nomination to the State and National Registers is required prior to the city utilizing Union County grant funds for the stabilization of the building. Vice Chairman Quirk made a motion to support the submission of the application for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Garrett made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Schneider; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: December 30, 2015

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission: March 22, 2016