

**Minutes of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
January 26, 2010, 8:00 PM, City Hall Library, 1st Floor, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ**

I. Open Public Meeting Statement

Planning Director William Nierstedt called the January 26, 2010 regularly scheduled meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 8:03 PM and read the following into the record: *“This meeting has been duly advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, 10:4-6 et seq. The annual schedule of board meetings has been published in the Courier-News newspaper. In addition, copies of the notice have been posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices. This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.”*

Name, Class Designation (term expires)	1/26/10	2/23/10	3/23/10	4/27/10	5/25/10	6/22/10	7/27/10	8/24/10	9/28/10	10/26/10	11/16/10	12/14/10
Chairwoman Sandra Gurshman / Class B (12/31/2010)	X											
William Michelson, Esq. / Class B (12/31/2010)	X											
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh / Class C (12/31/2011)	X											
Elizabeth King / Class C (12/31/2012)												
Vice Chairman Reginald Thomas, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)												
David Westlake, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)	X											
Bill Garrett / Class B (12/31/2012)	X											
Regular Member #8 vacancy / Class Designation (12/31/2010)												
Regular Member #9 vacancy / Class Designation, (expiration?)												
Alternate #1 Jan Jasper / Class C (12/31/2010)	X											
Alternate #2 vacancy / Class Designation (unexp. 12/31/2010)												
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton	X											
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman, PP/AICP												

Annual Reorganization of the Historic Preservation Commission

1. Nomination and Election of Chairperson: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to nominate Sandra Gurshman as Chairwoman for 2010 including the January 25, 2011 reorganization meeting. Mr. Michelson seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.

Planning Director Nierstedt turned the meeting over to Sandra Gurshman who thanked everyone for their confidence and called for nominations for the election of a vice chairperson.

2. Nomination and Election of Vice-Chairperson: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to nominate Reginald Thomas as Vice Chairman for 2009 including the January 26, 2010 reorganization meeting. Mr. Michelson seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.
3. Appointment of Historic Preservation Consultant: Sandra Gurshman informed the HPC that Ms. Hunton is hired as the HPC consultant through June 30, 2010 and there is no reason to act on this appointment at this time.
4. Appointment of Historic Preservation Commission Secretary: Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to appoint Scott Bauman as the HPC Secretary for 2010 including the January 25, 2011 reorganization meeting with fees of \$25 per hour, \$100.00 per meeting, not to exceed \$1,200.00 unless authorized by resolution. Mr. Westlake seconded the motion; all voted in favor, none opposed.

Chairwoman Gurshman stated for the record that Jan Jasper had arrived and read the next two resolutions into the record. She asked for a single motion to adopt both. Pat Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to adopt both resolutions; Bill Garrett seconded. And one voice vote was taken on both resolutions.

5. Designation of Official Newspaper: By majority voice vote, the HPC unanimously passed a resolution designating the Courier News as the official newspaper of the Plainfield HPC for the publication of official notices and as the official newspaper to receive notices for the purpose of the Open Public Meetings Act.
6. Adoption of Procedures, Forms, and By Laws of the HPC: By majority voice vote, the HPC unanimously passed a resolution adopting the procedures, forms, and by-laws of the Plainfield HPC for 2008 as cited in the land use ordinance adopted by City Council December 2, 2002.

II Adoption of the November 17, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

On motion made by Pat Turner Kavanaugh and seconded by Bill Michelson, the HPC unanimously adopted the 11/17/09 meeting minutes as amended with corrections made by HPC members and duly noted by Mr. Nierstedt.

Adoption of the December 15, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

On motion made by Bill Michelson and seconded by Pat Turner Kavanaugh, the HPC unanimously adopted the 12/15/09 meeting minutes as amended with corrections made by HPC members and duly noted by Mr. Nierstedt.

III. New Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

HPC 09-23: 926-928 Putnam Avenue; Block 642, Lot 4; Putnam Watchung Historic District

Applicant: Ultimate Investments, LLC / Owner: Dwayne Wiggins of KIJ Contracting

The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to repair the existing stucco exterior, install new hanging gutters, construct a new front porch consisting of roof, posts, railing, stairs, and lattice, install a new front door with side lite and transom, install new basement windows, and repair slate sidewalks.

Dwayne Wiggins from KIJ Contracting, PO Box 5446, Somerset NJ 08875 testified on behalf of the applicant. He advised that Ultimate Investment LLC, in Parsippany, purchased the property about a month ago. He stated that he has been working closely with Mr. Bauman to submit the application. They are proposing to restore the wood porch, front façade stucco, leaders and gutters, and repairing the slate sidewalk, in addition to interior electric and building work. They are basically undertaking a complete rehabilitation. The structure will be converted from a four family to a three family dwelling, with one unit on each floor.

Mr. Michelson asked Mr. Nierstedt if the conversion would require the applicant to submit an application to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Nierstedt advised that the applicant would not have to go to the Zoning Board.

The applicant will reduce the number of meters from 5 to 4. Four meters are still needed for three units, as there will also be a house meter. He advised that he and his wife worked very closely with Mr. Bauman who made a complex process seem very easy. Ms. Gurshman asked that that complement be passed on to Mr. Bauman.

The applicant advised that he will be installing hanging gutters. Ms. Gurshman asked that the straps be located beneath the shingles, and not above. Mr. Wiggins agreed. In response to further questioning by Ms. Hunton and Ms. Gurshman, the applicant advised that a previous contractor had repaired the existing Yankee Gutters, and roof including lining the gutters with aluminum and they are in working order. The applicant stated that he would retain the Yankee Gutters. He will remove the cinder block that is being utilized for the porch and replace with wood to match the original porch and others in the neighborhood.

He advised that a previous contractor installed vinyl clad windows on the entire structure without permits. The applicant will be installing unclad wood frame windows in the basement. Upon questioning by Mr. Michelson, Mr. Wiggins advised that the contractor probably installed the windows in 2007-08.

Mr. Gurshman asked about the details on the porch steps. Mr. Wiggins advised that installing bull nosed steps would not be a problem. Mr. Westlake asked about the wood decking and framing and advised that the proposed framing would have to be reversed from the submitted plans— the framing would have to run side to side, and the decking would have to be installed perpendicular to the structure. The applicant will be using 5/4 tongue and groove wood decking, not ‘back yard’ decking and Ms. Hunton advised him to contact the lumberyard and utilize

only wood that can be painted; wolmanized would should not be used. Ms. Hunton advised that this would be placed as a condition in the approval certificate.

Mr. Garrett asked about the fire escape and Mr. Wiggins advised that he will be reconstructing the fire escape to meet the new fire codes. The existing fire escape has been removed and new fire escape will be installed in the same location as the old in the rear of the dwelling on the left side of the dwelling. It will come out of the third floor kitchen window to a platform, then down to a second floor platform and a ladder will drop to the ground.

Mr. Wiggins asked about the chimney; he is proposing to demolish the interior chimney and install a new chimney on the outside, and he asked the Commission what they would prefer. After some discussion, the commission agreed that they would prefer replacement in-kind of the interior chimney rather than construction of a new exterior one. Mr. Wiggins advised that the existing chimney and flue are not sound. Mr. Wiggins will be constructing a new box through the roof, with the pipes on the inside, and then a box on the roof with stucco around it to match the previous one. Mr. Wiggins further advised that he will re-stucco where needed, principally on the right side of the structure. Ms. Hunton advised that she would place a condition in the approval certificate stating that the applicant is to use a real stucco mixture, not cement.

Mr. Wiggins will also replace the front door; he will include a side light and a transom over the door, which will be a 36" opening.

Mr. Wiggins also discussed the slate sidewalk work and he advised that he had discussed shaving the roots of the tree, not cutting them. He advised that he had discussed the matter with 'April' who advised that he might be able to get slate from the city Department of Public Works.

Ms. Gurshman opened the meeting to the public; hearing no response, she closed the public portion of the meeting. She then asked for a motion on the application. On a motion by Mr. Michelson, and seconded by Pat Turner Kavanaugh, the commission voted unanimously (6): Gurshman, Michelson, Kavanaugh, Westlake, Garrett and Jasper; Negative (0); Abstention (0) to approve the application subject to conditions regarding the front porch decking and steps, new chimney location and stucco box, elimination of one meter, restoration of Yankee gutters, and installation of hanging gutters under roof shingles.

Chairwoman Gurshman thanked the applicant and said she looked forward to his restoration of this house

V. New Business

1. 2008 & 2009 Year End Reports for the Historic Preservation Commission

Chairwoman Gurshman advised that this report will be discussed in February when Mr. Bauman returns.

2. Resolution Commemorating the Life of William Hetfield

On a motion by Bill Michelson and seconded by Pat Turner Kavanaugh, the commission voted unanimously to adopt the wording of the resolution commemorating Plainfield resident Bill Hetfield.

VI. Old Business

1. **PSE&G Solar 4 All Program: PSE&G Responses to Historic Preservation Commission Inquiries**

Chairwoman Gurshman updated the commission members on e-mail responses she has received from Eileen Leahey at PSE&G. She advised that regarding the tree trimming, if there is too much shade on an existing pole, PSE&G will not install the solar panel, they will not trim the tree in order to place a panel. Ms. Gurshman further asked that if anyone else has any questions for PSE&G, they forward them to her and she would forward them to PSE&G for a response. David Westlake questioned the ownership of heights on the panels. He said that communication wires are low, and electric wires are higher; he questioned how PSE&G is able to locate the panels as low on the poles as they are locating them. Bill Michelson asked about visual clutter the panels are creating and if the power generation behind the panels is sound; if the panels are actually creating any electricity yet, and if the electric generated is worth the investment.

2. **Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Website**

Jan Jasper advised the members that she has selected the web-master, and is currently selecting documents to be placed on the site, as well as the font and style. She asked Ms. Hunton to forward her pictures that had been taken

for the recently adopted guidelines and master plan. A discussion ensued about the technologically most efficient way to obtain and place the pictures. She also inquired as to whether one would need permission from the homeowners to place pictures of their structures on the site. Bill Michelson advised that they probably would; she was encouraged to use pictures of public places/structures such as city hall, in addition to churches, commercial properties and district signs. Chairwoman Gurshman advised using the city logo. She also asked Planning Director Nierstedt to place the Commission 2010 calendar on the city web site. It is anticipated that the city will provide the link from the city web site. The commission members only want their names, not phone numbers or addresses- on the web site. They also encouraged the placement of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment agendas/minutes on the city web-site. Gail Hunton advised her to check with the web-master as to the best format. Chairwoman Gurshman advised Ms. Jasper to check the Plainfield library for additional pictures.

3. Historic Designated Properties with Code / Maintenance Violations

Chairwoman Gurshman advised that the commission would discuss the violations when Mr. Bauman returns next month.

VII. Staff Report

1. Survey of 413 Properties for Proposed Historic District

Ms. Hunton advised that she is working on completing the summary table of the survey area by street. She hopes to have it completed by the February meeting.

2. Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites

Ms. Hunton advised that the City Council has adopted the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites.

VII. Open Public Session

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting for public discussion:

Joyce Phipps of 1200 Myrtle Avenue, a property in the area under review for historic designation status, asked what the commission saw as the defining characteristic of the area under review, and what sets this area apart from other areas of the city. Ms. Hunton advised that she would compare the subject area in terms of diversity to the Van Wyck Brooks District as it has the complete history of housing in the city within its borders, from the turnoff the 20th century through the 1920s and 1930s, through World War II. The area exemplifies the complete range of housing in Plainfield's 'boom era' of 1875-1930.

Robert Henning of 1351 Chetwynd Street asked if the commission will have a session where residents will be invited to a discussion of the study area. Chairwoman Gurshman advised that once the commission determines what makes sense to place in a district, and what does not, then the commission will schedule a meeting with residents. Ms Hunton explained that the city land use ordinance has defined criteria explaining when a change on a structure requires the obtaining of a Certificate of Appropriateness, and that there must be a material change that it is visible from street. She encouraged Mr. Henning to contact Mr. Bauman and review the Guidelines for Historic structures and Sites.

IX Adjournment

There being no further business, Pat Turner Kavanaugh made a motion for adjournment, and seconded by Bill Garrett the commission voted all in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Nierstedt, AICP, PP, Director of Planning
February 13, 2010