

**Minutes of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting
March 23, 2010, 8:00 PM, City Hall Library, 1st Floor, 515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ**

I. Open Public Meeting Statement

Chairwoman Sandy Gurshman called the March 23, 2010 regularly scheduled meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:36 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	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	X									
William Michelson, Esq. / Class B (12/31/2010)	X	X									
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh / Class C (12/31/2011)	X	X									
Elizabeth King / Class C (12/31/2012)		X									
Vice Chairman Reginald Thomas, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)		X									
David Westlake, RA / Class A (12/31/2012)	X	X									
Bill Garrett / Class B (12/31/2012)	X	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	X									
Alternate #2 vacancy / Class Designation (unexp. 12/31/2010)											
HPC Consultant Gail Hunton	X	X									
HPC Secretary Scott Bauman, PP/AICP		X									

II Adoption of the January 26, 2010, Regular Meeting Minutes

On motion made by Mr. Michelson and seconded by Ms. Kavanaugh, the HPC unanimously adopted the January 26, 2010, meeting minutes as amended with corrections made by HPC members and duly noted by Mr. Bauman. Chairwoman Gurshman wanted the record to reflect that the February 23, 2010, meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a meeting quorum- there were no Certificate of Appropriateness applications pending.

III. Request for Extension of a Previously Approved Certificate of Appropriateness

HPC 05-03: 747 Dixie Lane; Block 908, Lot 6; Netherwood Heights Historic District

On May 5, 2005, the Historic Preservation Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following work: replacement of two existing bay windows with 90 degree box bay casement windows, extension of asphalt shingle roofline over new box bay windows, installation of planter boxes under the new box bay windows, installation of planter boxes on the second floor balcony rails, installation of copper half-round gutters and round leaders along the first floor roofline, installation of full view screen/storm wood door at the front entrance, erect a wood arbor, install wrought iron hand rails at the front entrance in front of the arbor along the front porch steps.

The Applicant has requested an extension of the approval that expired on June 5, 2007. Mr. Bauman informed those present that pursuant to §17:10-7.H. of the Land Use Ordinance, a Certificate of Appropriateness is valid for a period of 2 years from date of issue unless reasonable extensions are granted by the Commission. After reviewing the conditions of the previous approval and learning that the Applicant does not intend to make any changes, the HPC was comfortable granting the extension under the condition that their action is agreed upon by the Commission’s legal counsel. Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public; hearing no response, she closed the public portion of the meeting. Chairwoman Gurshman asked for a motion on the application; on a motion by Mr. Michelson, and seconded by Ms. Kavanaugh, the Commission voted unanimously to grant the Applicant a two year extension with the condition that their action is agreed upon by the Commission’s legal counsel.

IV. New Business

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

Members of the Commission reviewed the report; Ms. King asked to add an additional column totaling the number of each activity. Commission members were pleased with the report- it lets the public know what kind of work the HPC approves. Commission members agreed that the reports should be forwarded to the City Council and Planning Board. Chairwoman Gurshman asked for a motion to approve the 2008 and 2009 HPC Year End Reports; on a motion by Ms. King, and seconded by Mr. Michelson, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the reports with the amendments suggested by Ms. King and to forward the amended report to the City council and to the Planning Board.

2. **Welcome David G. Brown, II- Director of Dept. of Public Works & Urban Development**

Mr. Brown introduced himself to the Commission and apologized because he had to leave due to an emergency situation on North Avenue.

V. Staff Report

1. **Survey of 413 Properties for Proposed Historic District**

Ms. Hunton presented to the HPC and public in attendance a map showing the study area. Ms. Hunton provided those present with a Streetscape Summary for each street included in the study area. In alphabetical order Ms. Hunton and the HPC discussed the following:

- a) Brook Lane: Strong street. Ms. Hunton pointed out the Webster-Martine house as being the most historically significant residence left in Plainfield.
- b) Cedar Brook Road: Strong street, same as Brook Lane.
- c) Chetwynd Avenue: Medium/weak street. Look at the abutting streets: 1920s, 30s, 40s. Vinyl on some structures, starting to see inappropriate additions and repairs.
- d) Edgewood Avenue: Strong street. Connector street containing 1920s colonial revival. Many structures still have wood siding and are in good shape.
- e) Evergreen Avenue: Strong street. Six of 45 contributing homes have vinyl siding.
- f) Highland Avenue: Strong street.
- g) Hillside Avenue (from Hillside Avenue Historic District line to Marlborough Avenue): "Maybe".
- h) Kensington Avenue (from Watchung Avenue to Thornton Avenue): Strong street. Contains two late 19th century houses.
- i) Lake Street: Not strong- smaller houses, great loss in historic character.
- j) Marlborough Avenue: Not strong- replacement siding on at least 8 of 19 structures. Gail only looked at the north side of the street but has now agreed to quickly assess the south side of the street.
- k) Martine Avenue: Medium strength street- starting to see the impact of inappropriate changes (siding, windows, etc).
- l) Park Avenue (from Prospect Avenue to Thornton Avenue): Not strong- should have never been surveyed. Structures altered dramatically.
- m) Pine Street: Not strong.
- n) Prospect Avenue: Strong street- the 1878 Plainfield map shows houses being built. Many architectural styles are shown on Prospect Avenue. There are some problems with bad alterations.
- o) Thornton Avenue: Medium strength street- many of the structures have been diminished by additions and repairs.
- p) Spring Street: Not strong.
- q) Watchung Avenue (1066-1018): Not strong
- r) Woodland Avenue (from Watchung Avenue to Marlborough Avenue, both sides): west side (between Prospect and Watchung- yes, east side is medium strength to not strong.

"After her street by street summary, Ms. Hunton told the HPC that the designation process requires HPC, Planning Board and City Council approval, in that order; if people who want to object can do it by petition, letter, or orally at a hearing, or any combination thereof, and we would have to keep a list. Ms. Hunton recommended the HPC consider Brook Lane, Cedar Brook Road, Prospect Avenue, and other roads- possibly add these properties to the already existing Putnam Watchung Historic District. Ms. Hunton explained that the Hillside

Historic District cuts in the middle of the study area and there are really two different districts unless the Hillside Historic District agrees to expand. Ms. Hunton recommended that HPC members be given a copy of the map of the study area and the streetscape summary, and conduct their own walking / driving tour to see the area for themselves.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. Carol Bicket of 1083 Hillside Avenue wanted to know where her property was located on the map. Ms. Hunton showed Ms. Bicket the location of her property; Ms. Bicket was satisfied with Ms. Hunton's answer. Joyce Phipps of 1200 Martine Avenue asked if there is a list of individual addresses. Ms. Hunton responded that there is and it is on her PC at home. Ms. Phipps asked about a potential timeline for the project. Ms. Hunton said that the HPC will now look at the survey area and a similar discussion will occur possibly at the next meeting in April; there is no specific time table. There is the possibility that HPC members will reach out to other historic districts as well. Ms. Phipps asked if the properties in a newly created historic district are accepted in "as is" condition; Ms. Hunton responded that the properties are accepted into the newly created district "as is". Ms. Phipps asked if paint colors are regulated; Ms. Hunton responded that paint color is not regulated.

2. NJ Historic Tax Credit Bill Reintroduced in 2010 Legislature

The Historic Property Revitalization Act (S659/ A1851) has been reintroduced by Sen. Barbara Buono and Assemblyman Reed Gusciora. Mr. Bauman provided HPC members with the text of the Senate Bill. The bill would provide credits against certain taxes for certain costs of rehabilitating historic properties. The HPC has supported this bill in the past and reiterated their support for the bill for this legislative session. Mr. Bauman agreed to prepare a draft letter of support to go out to our state representatives.

VI. Old Business

1. Historic Designated Properties with Code / Maintenance Violations

The HPC specifically discussed the Lampkin House on Terrill Road. Mr. Bauman gave the HPC an update on the foreclosure situation, the violation notices issued by the City (court date April 16), and potential grant opportunities to save the structure.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Pat Turner Kavanaugh made a motion for adjournment, and seconded by Bill Michelson the commission voted all in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Bauman, AICP, PP
Principal Planner / HPC Secretary
Plainfield Planning Division
April 13, 2010