

CONCORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Public Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
Second Floor Conference Room, 141 Keyes Road

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's Office, Concord's Historical Commission held a public meeting in the Second Floor Conference Room at 141 Keyes Road, Concord starting at 7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Electa Tritsch, Nancy Nelson, Diann Strausberg, Claire Gauthier

Associate Members Present: Robert Gross and Melissa Saalfield

Staff: Heather Lamplough, Senior Planner

Also Present: Alice Kaufman, BOS Liaison

Bill Rodgers, 155 Belknap Street

Chair Electa Tritsch called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Gauthier motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Nelson seconded. The agenda was approved (4-0).

Demolition Review: 155 Belknap Street

Ms. Lamplough provided the Commission with a brief summary of the application and the structure. Ms. Tritsch passed out a map from 1946 that shows the house and the garage. Bill Rodgers, the owner of 155 Belknap Street explained that the fieldstone foundation is falling in, that there are two unusable chimneys in the house, and the house still uses knob and tubing wiring. Mr. Rodgers stated that they were planning on placing solar panels on the roof and do other energy efficient upgrades, but they were told that the house cannot support those changes. He stated that their contractor has informed them that it would cost them the same amount to rehab the existing house as it would to demolish and build a brand new house. Mr. Rodgers stated that they want to stay on the street for their son. Ms. Gauthier asked about the leaking front door mentioned in the application. Mr. Rodgers explained that there are many small issues with the house due to its age, including the front door. Ms. Saalfield asked if they are amenable to renovating the existing structure if the cost is going to be the same. Mr. Rodgers stated that there are a lot of spaces in the house that just don't function well for their family, like the basement and the attic, and that renovating still wouldn't solve any of the space and layout issues that they are having. Ms. Strausberg asked to what degree the house is structurally deficient. Mr. Rodgers stated that an engineer reviewed the foundation and stated that it is failing, and wearing at different rates, and that the entire foundation would need to be replaced. Ms. Nelson asked why they wouldn't repair the foundation instead of replacing it. Mr. Rodgers stated that in order to repair the foundation, the house would need to be lifted, and that would add significantly to the project cost.

William and Kathy Andrews of 83 Grant Street, stated that when they were having an addition put on their house, their foundation ended up collapsing. They were interested in seeing the plans for the proposed new house.

Ms. Lamplough reviewed the Demolition Review Bylaw and the Commission's ability to waive the delay period.

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Ms. Gauthier stated that in her opinion the house is significant due to its age, architecture, and the historic streetscape. Ms. Tritsch stated that the community is dealing with large structures replacing large yards. Ms. Tritsch said that she is torn, she stated that can sympathize with the failing foundation, and that she would love to have a conversation about what would be built in place of this structure in the future. Ms. Tritsch stated that she would vote for the structure to be preferably preserved, so the owner would have 12 months to mull over the demolition and make a decision. Ms. Strausberg stated that she is also borderline on this application, but that she would like to see the demolition delayed and be provided with more evidence of the structural issues. Ms. Nelson stated that she is a little less torn than other commissioners because she has seen a lot of beautiful renovations, and is hopeful that the homeowners will find an imaginative architect.

Ms. Strausberg made a motion to find the structure at 155 Belknap Street to be Preferably Preserved. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0). Ms. Tritsch stated that the demolition of the structure would be delayed until January 22, 2019. Ms. Gauthier encouraged the homeowner to review the options and come back to the commission and show them the plans for what he plans to build. She also stated that the commission may also be able to waive the delay period if he came back with documentation of the structural issues of the house.

2018 Preservation Awards

Annette Bagley summarized the preservation awards program and stated that she is planning on enlisting a few other people to help judge the nominations that have been received. She stated that the commission can choose multiple winners in each category. Ms. Tritsch informed the commission that the tenants of the Wheeler Harrington house are moving, and that she thinks that the commission should include them in the awards ceremony recognizing their service to the Town. The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea.

The commission will be reviewing the nominations and voting at their meeting on April 26, 2018.

Discussion: Article 27 – Historic Districts Map Amendment – Hubbardville Extension

The Commission briefly discussed Article 27, which proposes to extend the Hubbardville Historic District to include 387 Sudbury Road, which was placed under Demolition Delay by the Commission in August. Mr. Gross stated that Sudbury Road, historically, would have been much narrower than it is in current day. Ms. Lamplough explained that the Historic Districts bylaw in Concord was established by a Special Act, and not under Mass General Law 40C, so it is different than most towns. She also explained that this would not be an issue of spot zoning, because the historic districts are not a zoning overlay. Ms. Kaufman reminded the commission that as a board members they can inform and encourage people to vote, however they cannot lobby for a warrant article. Ms. Tritsch encouraged members of the Commission to attend Town Meeting when this article is discussed.

Discussion: Street Marker Program

Ms. Lamplough explained that a resident had come into the office asking how to apply for a historic street marker, and that she explained that she would need to do some research into this. Ms. Lamplough stated that from the files, it appears that this was done back in the early 90's and hasn't been done in many years. Ms. Saalfield stated that one of the reasons the program slowed down was because the police department had an issue with the signs for safety reasons. Ms.

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Gauthier stated that she is on a branding and wayfinding committee that is exploring options for a new signage program for Concord center, and that these signs could possibly become a part of that program. Ms. Lamplough stated that she first needs to check with the police department and the DPW to get their approval to move forward with revitalizing this signage program. Ms. Gauthier stated that the Commission should work on cataloging the existing signs and create an application process that includes historical research, similar to the historic house markers. Ms. Saalfield stated that she would be the point person for this, as she was involved with it when it was first done 20 years ago.

Minutes

The minutes from the February 8, 2018 CHC meeting will be placed on the next meeting agenda for approval.

Other Business

Ms. Tritsch stated that the archeological study will be discussed at the April 26th meeting.

Ms. Tritsch asked that the commissioners review the Envision Concord draft, and provide any comments by April 20th. Ms. Kaufman said that they should review the draft to ensure that the language from the commission's original memo has been incorporated into the draft.

Ms. Lamplough informed the commission about a house at 64 Bedford Street that has been torn down, without first complying with the Demolition Review Bylaw. She explained that the building department has issued a stop work order and has asked what the Historical Commission would like to do. Ms. Nelson asked if the house loses its existing non-conformity since it has been torn down, and asked if they will also need to go back to the ZBA for an amendment to their project plans. The Commission stated that the owner of 64 Bedford Street needs to submit a report that includes photographs of the structure before the demolition, floor plans and elevations of the structure prior to demolition, and a narrative of the structure's history (historical background and context, chronology of development and residents, and a complete architectural description). The Commission stated that they would like this report to be submitted for their review by April 23rd.

Ms. Gauthier moved to adjourn. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Minutes Approved: April 26, 2018

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Lamplough``
Senior Planner