

CONCORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Public Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
Town House Public Hearing Room, 22 Monument Square

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's Office, Concord's Historical Commission held a public meeting in the Town House Public Hearing Room at 22 Monument Square, Concord starting at 7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Diann Strausberg, Nancy Nelson, Melissa Saalfield, Andrew Koh, Robert Gross, and Michael Capizzi

Staff: Heather Gill, Senior Planner

Ms. Strausberg called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Demolition Review Public Hearing – 1075 Lowell Road

Ms. Strausberg summarized the demolition review bylaw and explained the public hearing process. Ms. Gill reviewed the historical significance of the property and summarized the site visit.

Thomas Wray Falwell, project attorney, stated that the house is too large and grandiose for his clients. Mr. Falwell stated that they do not have a formalized plan for what will be constructed on the property at this time. Mr. Falwell stated that his clients want to be good stewards of the land, which is what attracted them to the property and why they purchased it. Duncan McArthur stated that it is a family that purchased the property.

Mr. Capizzi asked if the comprehensive reuse of the building has been considered and asked if the owner has considered using the building for some sort of public use? Mr. Falwell stated that the family's desire is privacy. Mr. McArthur stated that the location of the existing house is the ideal location for the new dwelling.

Ms. Saalfield stated that this was a Shurcliff landscape, that has already begun being destroyed. Ms. Saalfield asked if the owners were interested at all in what they purchased. Mr. McArthur stated that the family is interested in the land. Ms. Strausberg asked if they have considered moving the structure or any other options to help preserve the house. Mr. McArthur stated that they are open to the house being moved if someone wants it and pays for it to be moved, and stated that they are also considering donating interior features of the house.

Mr. Koh asked if a landscape survey was done to determine the best location on the property? Mr. McArthur stated that they are working with a landscape architect to return the landscape to what was there before it was manipulated for the house. Mr. McArthur stated that the owners like the location next to the pond, and that there are wetlands on the property and trails for the public that the owner would like to maintain. Mr. Gross stated that he believes that the landscape is, within reason, within the commission's purview, because the landscape was designed with the house.

Ms. Saalfield stated that there is this large, well-maintained house, and asked why they can't gut the interior and maintain the exterior? Mr. McArthur stated that right off the bat, the owners would want to demolish at least fifty percent of the existing building, because it is too large. Mr. Gross stated that the building may not be made for these clients, but its not a far cry from being made for modern living. Mr. Gross stated that there are houses in Concord that are larger than this.

Ms. Nelson arrived late to the meeting at 7:29 PM. Ms. Nelson stated that during the site visit the landscape drawings were located, and asked if the architectural drawings of the existing house are available. Mr. McArthur stated that if they have them, he would share them with the Commission.

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Ms. Saalfield stated that Harry Little [the architect that designed this building] is an important architect to the town of Concord, and she believes that a historic structures report should be completed. The Commission discussed what a historic structures report is, and the academic expertise that is required by the author. Mr. Falwell stated that the commission can come in to see the building. Ms. Nelson stated that generally historic structures reports are done by an architectural historian, and the commission does not have that expertise. Mr. Koh stated that the report is a formal exercise for future documentation; and that one hundred years from now someone can look back on and see details about the structure. Ms. Strausberg stated that salvaging architectural features from the house, especially from the interior is important.

Mr. Falwell stated that they can consult with the owners of the property and contact some consultants to get an idea of the scope and cost, and will get back to the Commission.

Ms. Strausberg explained what green demolition is, and stated that when this structure comes down this is the method that should be used. *Green demolition is the dismantling of a building so that as many of its elements as possible (usually around 80 percent) can be recycled or reused rather than going to landfills.* Mr. Capizzi stated that the architectural vocabulary of this house is unique in Concord, and the Commission has a responsibility to try to preserve the historic character of the town.

There were no public comments on the application.

Ms. Strausberg reviewed the outcomes of the Historical Commission's determination; including a determination of not preferably preserved; a determination of preferably preserved with a one year delay; and the option to come back during the delay to discuss options.

Ms. Saalfield moved to find the house at 1075 Lowell Road to be preferably preserved and to delay the demolition of the structure for one year [retroactive to application date in January], with a strong recommendation that that owner of the property provide a Historic Structure Report for the building, in an effort to document this unique historical resource prior to its demolition.. Mr. Capizzi seconded the motion and ALL OTHERS VOTED IN FAVOR. The motion passed (4-0).

Drone Photometry Presentation

Andrew Koh introduced Ian Roy to the Commission. Mr. Roy is the Director for Research Technology and Innovation in Brandeis University's Library. He is also the Founding Head of the Brandeis MakerLab and an Adjunct Professor at the Brandeis International Business School. Mr. Koh briefly summarized the timeline of archeology in Concord and Mr. Roy gave a presentation on the use of drone photometry in archeological research.

Historical Commission Charge Amendments

The Commission asked that this be placed on their next meeting agenda.

Discussion: Goals for Upcoming Year

The Commission asked that this be placed on their next meeting agenda.

Updates

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Ms. Gill explained that the Department of the Interior has released proposed changes to the National Historic Preservation Act regulations that will have a substantial impact on how properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Gill explained where commissioners can submit comments and feedback on these proposed changes.

Minutes

Ms. Nelson moved to approve the meeting minutes from December 13, 2018, January 31, 2019 and March 28, 2019. Ms. Saalfield seconded the motion and ALL OTHERS VOTED IN FAVOR. The motion passed (4-0).

Other Business

Ms. Gill reminded the commission about the 2019 Mass History Conference and stated that if they would like to attend to please email her by Monday.

Alan Bogosian, a prospective member, summarized his history and his interest in serving on the Historical Commission.

Ms. Strausberg announced that she will be resigning from the Commission, as she is moving out of Concord. Ms. Strausberg recommended that Mr. Capizzi moves up to a full member position, and that Ms. Saalfield is the next chairperson.

Ms. Nelson moved to recommend Mr. Capizzi to a full member as of June 1, 2019. Ms. Saalfield seconded the motion and ALL OTHERS VOTED IN FAVOR. The motion passed (4-0).

Ms. Nelson moved to nominate Alan Bogosian to the commission as an associate member as of June 1, 2019. Mr. Koh seconded the motion and ALL OTHERS VOTED IN FAVOR. The motion passed (4-0).

Ms. Saalfield moved to adjourn. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion and all others voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 P.M.

Minutes Approved: June 13, 2019

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Gill
Senior Planner