

Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

City Hall

3rd Floor Conference Room

6:30 p.m.

Staff Present: Kristi Chase, Brandon Wilson.

Members Present: Dick Bauer, Barbara Mangum, Michael Payne, Cheryl Vanderbilt, DJ Chagnon*, Susan Fontano*, Abby Freedman *, Jeff Meese*. Michael Payne arrived at 7:15 pm.

Members Absent: John Bunzick, Stephen Glines, David Guss*, Susan Rabinowitz*, Derick Snare*, Brad Stearns*.

Others: Present: Bob Doherty, Tom DeYoung

Meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm.

Approval of HPC Minutes: February

Motion to accept February minutes by O. Susan Fontano, seconded by Jeff Meese. The minutes were accepted unanimously (5-0-2(Barbara Mangum & DJ Chagnon)).

Deliberation of HPC Cases

No cases of alterations to LHD properties this month

Demolition Reviews

HPC 06.16 D – 55-61 Clyde Street (MaxPac Site) - Update

Applicants: Leslie Donovan, Preservation Consultant; Matt O’Neill, Director of Development, KSS Realty Trust

Received 03/14/06	Determined Significant 03/21/06	Preferably Preserved 04/18/06	9 Months 01/18/07
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The revised MOA has been signed. Staff to bring to Registry of Deeds for recording.

HPC #06.27 D– 46 Pearl Street – 1871 Ezra Conant House – Update

Applicant: John Mahoney, Developer

Received 04/20/06	Determined Significant 09/16/03	Preferably Preserved 05/16/06	9 Months 02/16/07
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Mr. Mahoney called to say he plans to rebuild house as a one-family and to construct a second brick building in rear of lot that compliments its Florence Street neighbors. He will be working with new architect. What steps can the Commission take to ensure that the building is maintained and rehabilitated? Requests for clarification have been sent before to the Law Department.

Andrew Upton contacted Alderman Roche who put forth a Board Order 4/28/05 due to the Commission decision on April 26, 2005 (3-1 with 1 abstention) to request the Ward 1 Alderman Bill Roche, put in a board order for a request for clarification from the Law Department

1) Whether Mr. Mahoney’s demolition of part of the building (in direct contravention of a previous Commission vote to declare the building "significant") renders him ineligible for a building permit per the Demolition Delay Ordinance.

2) Whether the City can take any eminent domain or condemnation proceedings against the property.

3) Whether any fines should be accruing, and or levied, due to his violation of the Ordinance and, possibly, other City codes and regulations.

HPC 05.57 D– 280 Broadway – Elbridge Davis Carriage House

Applicant: Fred Camerato, Developer

Received	Determined Significant	Preferably Preserved	9 Months
10/21/05	09/15/05	03/21/06	12/21/06

Building is still standing. He has not submitted a notification form for the demolition. Katherine Montgomery is planning to work with Mr. Camerato to do more photo-documentation of the carriage house.

Demolition Reviews by Staff determined to be “not significant” since last HPC Meeting in February

HPC 07.09 D – 94 Concord Avenue – 1922 concrete block garage

Applicant: Kevin Hickey

Received	Determined Not Significant
02/27/07	03/06/07

Certificates of Non-Applicability Issued by the Staff

HPC: 07.11 – 53 Hudson Street 02/27/07

Applicant: Maria & Matthew Balestrieri, Owners

1. Repair and replace asphalt 3-tab shingles in-kind.

HPC: 07.12 – 21 College Hill Avenue 02/28/07

Applicant: Fox, Zacheiss & Montgomery, Owners

1. Install stove vent not visible from the public right-of-way.

HPC: 07.15 – 23 Pleasant Avenue 03/19/07

Applicant: Jeff Glaser, Contractor for Karla Ellenbogen & Ron Elbert

1. Replace shingles in-kind as required;

2. Cut back rake moldings on both sides of main gable and mitre into gutter returns;
3. Repair and replace gutters and fascia in kind as required;
4. Replace soffit return;
5. Replace water table board and siding at rear entry;
6. Patch porch posts;
7. Repair and replace framing and soffits as required on round bay;
8. Reinstall brackets as required; and
9. Paint.

Section 106 Reviews done by Staff

HPC: 07.13 – 11-15 Bow Street

Applicant: Diesel Café 2

No Adverse Effect

03/15/07

1. Install emergency egress on courtyard;
2. Install new windows on first & second floors
3. Install new signage on front façade and on existing orthogonal sign
4. Insert new masonry to match existing where needed;
5. Install window boxes; and
6. Install new outdoor lighting.

HPC: 07.14 – 86 Joy Street

Applicant: Joy Street Studios

No Adverse Effect

03/15/07

1. Remove and replace windows;
2. Remove all signage and replace with new
3. Clean and repoint all masonry
4. Repaint;
5. Relocate utilities;
6. Remove chain link fence; and
7. Repave and landscape area.

Other Business - Project Updates

Because of a computer problem, no printed final agenda was produced and there were no cases of alterations, the Commission meeting was more free-form. Topics of discussion were as follows:

LHD Expansion Project: *Brandon, Kristi and Ed Gordon attended the Massachusetts Historical Commission meeting where the Revised Preliminary Report was presented by the MHC staff person, Chris Skelly and discussed. The Somerville submittal was the third and last LHD proposal on the MHC agenda and the Report was very favorably received. The MHC was impressed at the substantial amount of work that had been done and simply noted that the Final Report from the SHPC needs to clear up a few details, including the LHD maps that were not complete or ready for recording. The MHC recommended that all the removed properties be reconsidered. Brandon assured the MHC that they had already been reconsidered. The MHC voted unanimously to acknowledge receipt of the Report, and was pleased to see a number of*

religious properties included in the LHD Expansion Project. Kristi and Ed have been working hard to complete the Final Report; double-checking all the information, re-doing the maps and lists as needed, and preparing a draft for Brandon's review and editing.

Demolition by Neglect Ordinance: *Brandon and Kristi have been asked to submit some draft provisions based upon other communities' ordinances to the Law Department by the end of the month. An Assistant City Solicitor will use this information as a starting point for a draft ordinance for BOA consideration. 46 Pearl Street will be considered as a case in point. Dick Bauer and Jeff Meese to be on the Committee.*

Events and Celebrations:

Patriot's Day event sponsored by the City and the SHPC – *Brandon is working with several groups to expand the program this year: Historic Somerville, Rainbow Girls, East Somerville Main Street (ESMS), Holiday Inn, CostumeWorks, and the East Somerville Community School. More inviting and earlier publicity with the help of EBMS and a Prospect Hill resident is in the works to increase attendance by local folks, especially youth. Barbara Mangum, both as a Commission member and the President of Historic Somerville, is eager to have more people dressed in clothing that would be appropriate for the colonial period, as well as to assume the roles of actual people who lived in Somerville (actually Beyond the Neck at that time) and might have seen Paul Revere that eventful night. She and Brandon have been working with a local costume designer to help create more colonial period clothing for people to wear in the Procession from the Holiday Inn to Foss Park, as well as to other annual historic events, including the Memorial Day Parade, the annual Ghosts of Somerville in October, the Flag Raising on January 1st, and other events anticipated in future years. Brandon, Kristi, Barbara, and few others worked last weekend on cutting out patterns for such clothing with the owner of a local business, CostumeWorks, who will be stitching up some of the new clothing.*

Chief Bradley, his horse Whisper, a fife and drum band, local and State officials, and hopefully lots of local people dressed in colonial attire will lead the parade. Commission members and friends and families are encouraged to join them. Once again Brandon has arranged for the Holiday Inn to host a reception at the beginning of the Program, at 9 am, and O. Su has agreed to donate lots of balloons to enhance the event and parade route. The Director, and the Board of the new East Somerville Main Streets Program is helping with many aspects of the event. The Somerville Museum, with Evelyn Battinelli as Acting Director, is also working closely with the Commission Staff as always, and all members of the Commission are urged to help publicize the event by emailing the new flyer to friends and neighbors, and posting in local establishments.

Preservation Month – Brandon noted that the schedule of events so far are:

Prospect Hill Walking Tour: Sunday, May 6, 2007; 2-4 pm

Historic Bike Tour with Medford: Saturday, May 19, 2007; 10 am – 1 pm

Conway Park to Union Square Walking Tour: Sunday, May 20, 2007; 2-4 pm

Preservation Awards Ceremony at Somerville Museum: Thursday, May 31, 2007; 6:30 – 9 pm

ArtsUnion will sponsor the Prospect Hill and Union Square Walking Tours that Ed Gordon will lead.

Jeff Meese suggested that the Aldermen be given the names of Award recipients early enough that they could give them Aldermanic Citations and perhaps make a point of attending the Ceremony themselves.

Fall events tentatively scheduled:

Middlesex Canal Bike Tour led by Dick Bauer et al: Saturday, September 29, 2007

Ghosts of Somerville produced by Barbara Mangum, Historic Somerville, and co-sponsored by the ArtsUnion 2007 grant: Saturday, October 20, 2007; 6pm at Milk Row Cemetery.

East Broadway Main Street will have their opening reception at the Cross Street Elderly Center on Wednesday, April 11 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Middlesex Canal Commission will have their annual meeting at the Museum in Billerica on March 22 at 3:00 pm. One item on the agenda is an update on various communities' new interpretive signage for the Canal, which at this point is still outstanding for Somerville.

Capital Budget – Brandon is submitting requests for funds for repair and restoration of the Prospect Hill Tower, handicapped accessibility for the West Somerville Branch Library, and additional restoration work at the Milk Row Cemetery for consideration this year. Barbara Mangum suggested that the Brown School, the Central Library and City Hall ought to be included as well as they all need substantial repair and restoration work and might be ignored if left out of the current capital planning budget. Brandon explained that she could only ask for a certain amount to be considered and based upon discussions with the A & F Director for the SPCD she believed that these three projects were the most pressing ones for this year, and even they were not likely to be affordable by the City this year. She promised to keep Barbara's suggestions in mind for next year, and hoped that she could find adequate financial documentation for them by then.

Union Square Zoning – The new zoning has been proposed as an economic stimulus for the Square. This would be done through greater clarification of permitted uses for artists, more incentives for creating arts-related uses and arts programming in the Union Square area. In response to significant community input, the City is now revisiting the proposed zoning. The main issues are proposed maximum building heights in the PUD-C1, the boundaries of the PUD-C, and the amount of affordable housing required by developers, and for whom the housing would be available in addition to "artists."

Abby Freedman noted that most business owners would like to receive maximum financial benefit from their properties, and therefore the proposed zoning could be a disincentive for them to want to retain their existing buildings and be designated as individually "Historic" which would require more review and discussion with the SHPC and other historic organizations. The zoning also calls into question the effectiveness and strength of the Demolition Review Ordinance and Historic Districts Ordinance because buildings that are more than 50 years old, or are listed on or are eligible for listing on the National Register, or are designated or eligible for designation as Local Historic Districts are included within the boundaries of the proposed

PUD-C. In general a PUD (Planned Unit Development) tries to ensure that any new development(s) within it balances open space with the amount of building density. The parcel size of the PUD-C, 25,000 sq. ft. is not really a large enough size to balance open space with density and height. Abby believed that all of Union Square should be considered a “historic district” and that the new zoning should allow for changes there, but not create incentives for removal of its architectural character. She had spoken with Alderman Taylor who thought that the HPC should get more directly involved. She noted how well rehabilitation of the Bow Street Police Station had turned out and how the SHPC could think about how restore buildings in the Square whose original heights had been significantly truncated in the 20th century.

O. Su Fontano pointed out that one could ask for a seat at the table to discuss the proposed zoning ordinance. Michael Payne said that last fall the City through then Director James Kostaras had asked for the Commission’s involvement early in the process. He had met with both Jim Kostaras and the Mayor to discuss the LHD Expansion when the Union Square Zoning was also discussed. At that time it was suggested that it would be great if the SHPC could help develop Development Guidelines for non-historic infill properties , and a pre- application grant proposal to the MHC was discussed for this purpose, but somehow the focus was changed before submission, and the proposal was not approved by the MHC.

The Commission as a whole decided that they would like to have a better understanding of the proposed zoning and how it would effect the historic fabric of Union Square. Brandon agreed to request a presentation from the principal planner involved with the zoning revisions, Joe Merkel, as soon as he returned from vacation next week.

A subcommittee concerned with zoning amendments to Union Square was formed, consisting of Abby Freedman, DJ Chagnon, Cheryl Vanderbilt.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.