



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 29, 2020

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair
Bruce Hickey, Vice-Chair
Janet Boswell
Jon Carlisle
John Clemson
Emily Dowling

Members Absent: Jennifer Adams

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
Maureen Meister
Ellen Newman
Don Foote
Steven Margles
Brendon Kerrigan
Yukiko
Fulton Harley
Martin O'Donnell
Sheena Hsieh
Margot Bosse
Kevin Sarney
Maureen Meister
Wei Chen
Anthony Marino
Raegan McCain
Diab Jarius
Hank Lin
Robert Ain
Peter Casey
Dara Bogovich
Jamie Devol
Julia Aquino
Audrey Bosse
John McEleney
Russell Gay

A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m.

Public Hearing: Demolition Permit Application – 910 Main Street

Commissioner Clemson described the research completed to date on what is formally known as the Patrick Dowd House, constructed about 1876. He noted that it is rare in form, a landmark from the North as a gateway into town, and an important property in a prominent location. The initial occupant was an important local manufacturer, a native of Ireland who immigrated in the 1860s. The family occupied the house continuously until 1954. Clemson referenced prior research conducted during an early survey of the town, which included a recommendation that it be listed on the National Register.

Anthony Marino, the applicant, explained that the building does not meet his needs in any respect and he plans to construct a residential development that complies with zoning requirements. In response to a question about the current state of the structure, Mr. Marino stated that the foundation is in “rough” condition and that neighbors had complained of rodents.

Maureen Meister noted that the Planning Board met and discussed Mr. Marino’s proposal and prepared a letter. She asked the Chair to read the letter into the record, which Mr. LeMenager did. (Attached.)

Ms. Meister said the Planning Board’s first interest is preservation of landmark buildings in the area and that the ideal project at 910 Main Street would incorporate the existing building. She noted that two major zoning changes made by Town Meeting in recent years, both of which required a 2/3 vote, were designed to reduce the negative impact of extremely large developments on North Main street that have an adverse impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Raegan McCain (18 Canal Street) asked the applicant whether he envisioned building a single family or multifamily home. He responded that he does not envision building a single family. She expressed how special the area is with its older homes. Hers was built in 1875. She is concerned about the project’s scale, coherence with the surrounding neighborhood, and traffic implications, for children walking to Lynch Elementary School. She encouraged the Commission to stop the proposed demolition.

Russell Gay (15 Canal Street) asked if Mr. Marino could incorporate the current structure into his design and rebuild the building’s foundation. The applicant said he has no interest in keeping the structure.

Diab Jarius (26 Canal Street). Though he is a Planning Board Member, Jarius said he was commenting as a resident of Canal Street, who lives on one of the few “undamaged stretches” of residential houses in the area. He wants the town to preserve the historic structures, which create the feel of the neighborhood. He noted that a lot of housing was connected to the currier trade, his home, built in 1890 included. There is continuity in time and style of a lot of houses in the neighborhood. He feels it is important to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. He commented that he hasn’t heard of any neighbors who are in favor of the project or who have complained about a rodent infestation of the existing building.

The Meeting was closed to public comment and Commissioners deliberated the building’s historic value. Boswell commented that the building is an important asset to the town in every possible dimension, and is a particularly important landmark that plays a key role in the redevelopment plans for the North Main Street area. Commissioner Clemson concurred, as did Vice-Chair Hickey and Commissioner Carlisle. Commissioner Dowling and Chair LeMenager stated that they hoped the building would be brought back to life and used in a way that takes full advantage of the property.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds the property located at 910 Main Street historically significant. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

MOTION: The Historical Commission voted to impose a 12-month delay on issuance of a demolition permit for the property located at 910 Main Street. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

Board of Appeals Petitions

30 Clark Street: Special permit to construct an addition closer to the front and side property lines than permitted as of right. Brendon Kerrigan and Meghan Merulo, the owners noted that the proposed changes would add a floor above the current bump out, but not change the existing footprint. They also hope to construct a retaining wall in the rear.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource and recommends favorable action with no conditions

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

36 Mt. Pleasant Street: Special Permit to construct an addition closer to the front property line than permitted as of right. The owner, Steven Margles, said the project will expand the family room on the Mt. Pleasant side of the corner property.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource and recommends favorable action with no conditions

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

326 Highland Avenue: Site Plan Review. The applicants seek to construct a two-level addition on the back, which would expand the kitchen and replace the existing bulkhead and entrance to the basement. Materials would be cedar shingles with some composite materials.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource and recommends favorable action with no conditions

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

77 Woodside Road: Special permit to construct an addition closer to the front property line than permitted as of right. Julia and Patrick Aquino, the owners commented that the property is existing non-conforming. Exterior will be matched to existing and look as if it were original. Mr. Clemson offered some history of the street and did not see any adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood, as the addition will be on the rear and not visible from the public way.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource and recommends favorable action with no conditions

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

78 Sylvester Avenue: Owner Ellen Wilson initially sought to demolish the single-family dwelling on the property and replace it with a new single-family. On 4/28/2020 Commissioners LeMenager, Hickey, and Clemson invoked 3.3(a) of Chapter 14 and presumptively allowed the demolition permit to be issued. Now the owner seeks approval of the application to build the planned replacement structure closer to the front property line than permitted as of right.

MOTION: The Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource and recommends favorable action with no conditions

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

Other matters

Minutes of June 1, 2020 meeting.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the June 1, 2020 Historical Commission Meeting Minutes.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (Adams absent)

Onset of Demolition Delay

The owners of 16 Niles Lane were originally scheduled to come before the Commission tonight with their request for a demolition permit but requested and were granted a continuance to the Commission's next meeting (August 3). This gave rise to the question of whether any imposed delay would run from the original permit application date or the date determination of significance is made.

Traditionally, demolition delays have run from the date the demolition permit application was filed. Commissioner Clemson would like to extend the delay in cases where applicants ask for a continuance before the Commission has made a determination of historical significance. He notes that for the bylaw to effectively encourage preservation, the delay should be a full year that runs from the date of the determination.

Commissioner Hickey took a contrary view based on the Commission's precedent of dealing with permit applications in the past. He noted that the Commission has always started from the date the demolition permit application was received by the Building Department, although language to that effect is not included in the current bylaw, revised in 2016. In the transition to the amended and updated Chapter 14, this was inadvertently omitted. The old bylaw used to specify that delays ran "12 months from the date of the application for the demolition permit." Mr. Hickey advocates for starting the delay at the time of permit application.

Commissioners LeMenager and Hickey discussed whether the Commission needed an amendment to the bylaw to address this issue. Hickey concluded that it does not. He will draft a letter informing the applicant that the amount of time the review process is postponed by the applicant will be added to the permit delay period. (Attached)

Mr. and Mrs. Martin O'Donnell were present for 16 Niles Lane, not having learned that it was continued until next month. They expressed concern about the lack of notice they have received.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m. Next meeting: Monday, August 3, 2020, via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted

Janet Boswell, Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. LeMenager', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jack LeMenager, Chair

8/12/20
Date