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CITY OF STAMFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
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Minutes of Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC)

Date: Regular Meeting held: October 14, 2014
Location: Stamford City Hall, 888 Washington Blvd. Stamford CT 06901
Land Use Bureau - 7th fl. conference Room
Present: Anne Goslin (acting chair for meeting), Lynn Drobbin, Jill Smyth, David Woods, Barry Hersh, Elena Kalman (alternate), R. Shannonhouse (alternate), and Lynn Villency Cohen (alternate).

REGULAR MEETING
I Call to order (Meeting called to order 7:05)

II. introductions - sign in sheet

III Approval of Minutes

The Commission voted to approve the minutes of the September meeting: (Moved by B. Hersh, seconded by J. Smyth, and carried unanimously.

IV NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of funding procedures City of Stamford, James Hricay,

J. Hricay presented procedures for funding requests with the city. The following was noted.

- There are two ways to get funds from the city budget process. 1. Annual budget process and 2. Additional appropriation
- The annual budget process starts in December. In January the requests go to the mayor and on March 8th the mayor submits the budget to the Board of Finance and the Board of Reps.
- The Board of finance votes on the request first.
- Additional appropriations can be made throughout the year through his office of Policy and Management. The process can be assisted by J. Hricay's office.
- Appropriations will normally take 2 months. It is first submitted to the board of Finance and then the Board of Reps.
- Appropriations are normally for emergency items or un-funded responsibilities such as Smith House

Outside money may be available through a grant process.

- All grant requests go through the city's grants office.

- HPAC will normally write the grant request or application and the grants office will review and assist.
- HPAC will need to do the research for grant opportunities.

HPAC will want to make a request for a part time staff person to assist the commission. The commission is also interested in making a request for a cultural / historic structure survey.

- J. Hricay indicated it is best to seek funds for part time position in the next regular budget sequence starting in December.
- HPAC will seek funds for the survey tasks. (may be grant opportunity)
- J. Hricay indicated HPAC requests for a staff person funding will be assigned to a department. It will probably be "planning".
- It is possible for HPAC to seek contracted services for some of the tasks such as the survey. J. Hricay noted that requests under $7,500. do not need to be advertised with an RFP. Above $7,500, an RFP must be issued for competitive bid on any contract.
- It will be best for HPAC to attach support dollars to the planning department budget for the staff part time position.
- J. Hricay is available to assist with any requests as the process gets started in December.

B. Third and Fourth Street project, John Pugliesi, Ravi Ahuja

J. Pugliesi presented the 3rd and 4th St. project for review. A site plan showing the existing structures over-laid with the new development plan was handed out. The following was noted.

- The project seeks to build 23 units of "garden style apartments". Parking is under each unit and some on site. Some units have two covered parking spaces.
- Demolition has been approved for 4 older houses that are now used as offices or for multi-family housing.
- There is no other way to work out the development plan without demolishing the 4 houses and outbuildings.
- The demo permit has been issued as any objections/delays have been cleared.
- The total sq footage of the existing houses is 10,766 sq. ft. and the new development is 1,800 sq. ft. average for 23 units, or 41,400 sq. ft.
- The project is as-of-right" with zoning, except that a special exception is required for the BMR units.
- 1.67 cars are provided per unit for a total of 39 parking spots.
- The zoning hearing is next week and the development team would like to obtain HPAC referral comments by then.
- The materials proposed are vinyl siding and "cultured" stone, building base and garden walls along the sidewalk.

W Haynes indicated that HNPP reviewed the demo permit and the project some months ago and was not able at the time to issue an objection. The demolition was reviewed before the HPAC was formed. The objection to the demolition was placed by Linda Vetti, a concerned

Stamford citizen who was invited to attend the HPAC meeting. W. Haynes made the following notes as expressed to J. Pugliesi previously.

- Building massing and street massing is important as the neighborhood has a single family scale even with the conversion to office and professional space in many of the buildings. Some of the older houses are setback with lawns and large front porches.
- HNPP encouraged the development team to consider the density bonus in the zoning code section 7.3 - to help save some of the buildings.
- The context on the street has changed over the years and greater density is being proposed in the new Master Plan.
- With greater density the planning concept should still try to keep the buildings within the scale and proportion of the neighborhood.

L. Drobbin noted that the HPAC is concerned with the change in density in the collar district and with the erosion of scale of the buildings in this area. Further comments from the commission are noted.

- HPAC is evaluating this proposal at a late stage.
- HPAC will discuss and make a recommendation.
- E. Kalman noted that the scale of the massing and the materials should be respected by the development team even with a new building project. The HPAC is not an architectural review commission, but HPAC should enforce the retention of the neighborhood's scale and the use of traditional contextual materials in new projects, where existing buildings of some historical character are proposed to be demolished.
- B. Hersh noted that HPAC can advise the zoning board with it's recommendations.
- D. Woods noted that the vinyl siding materials should not be used as the product is not environmentally safe. Precast or "simulated" stone should not be used. Materials should be more traditional, durable and sustainable.
- E. Kalman noted that there are some precast materials, such as Hardie plank and/or shingles, cementicous boards, that are a better siding product and looks more traditional. She encourages this instead of vinyl siding.

A motion was made to issue a letter to the zoning board with the following notes.

1. HPAC does not have a basis for objection to the demolition, as a delay has already expired.
2. HPAC would have preferred that the buildings be preserved on the site and understands the proposed development considers this not feasible.
3. HPAC discourages the use of vinyl siding and simulated stone products and encourages the use of traditional, durable, and sustainable materials that will relate to the historic residential context.
4. HPAC would have preferred that the density bonuses had been used as a means of saving some buildings and/or creating new buildings with a scale that relates to the neighborhood.

(The motion was moved by B. Hersh, seconded by J. Smyth, and carried unanimously.

C. Spencer Baeyertz property, 817-819 Long Ridge Road, J. Murphy, R. Redinss

J. Murphy presented this project as a referral from the zoning board. It is an application for a Special Exception use for two historical buildings on Long Ridge Road. The special exception use will ensure that the buildings will continue to be used as a real estate office and will be preserved. The following features of the application are noted.

- The applicant has requested consultation from R. Kahn and W. Haynes of HNPP, and they have provided a letter of support.
- The applicant has obtained an historical evaluation from Nils Kerschus, included in the package.
- The planning board has approved the designation, with final to be reviewed by the zoning board at the next meeting.
- The buildings are intended to continue operating as a real estate office. There is no intention to change the buildings. The owner wants to have them protected.
- The owners are seeking a "special exception" permit to give them that protection.
- They are not seeking a historic designation with the state at this time.
- The application has also been made for a "Historic Preservation Easement" to ensure that the property will not change and it's historical character will be preserved. The team has agreed to three terms as a part of the easement. 1. Pictures of the historical structure will be included. 2. If the buildings are destroyed by some unusual occurrence then the easement will be lifted. 3. The signature on the release of any easement will need to be given by the land use bureau chief.

W. Haynes spoke in support of the application and the referral to HPAC.

- HNPP has a strong support for the Special Exception application as a means to accomplish the same thing - historic preservation.
- HNPP encourages the owner to pursue state designation after this city approval process is complete.
- This is a unique case because preservation is tied to the "use" of the building and not just the properties.
- The property will use Section 7.3 as a means for preservation.
- This section 7.3 has been used on about 40 properties since it was written.
- HNPP encourages HPAC to make a positive referral to the zoning board.

A motion was made to issue a letter to the zoning board supporting the 817-819 Long Ridge road application for Special Exception use, with the Historic Preservation Easement. The letter should contain:

1. HPAC has reviewed the application a its regular meeting of October 14th
2. HPAC supports the application for Special Exception Use for Historic buildings in Section 7.3-D-2-d.

(The motion was moved by B. Hersh, seconded by J. Smyth, and carried unanimously.

D. Mill River Bridge A. Goslin, W. Haynes meeting report

A. Goslin presented a report of the city's meeting about the existing Mill River Bridge. Vehicle use on the bridge was stopped some years ago. It continues to be used for pedestrian traffic and sits at the end of Main Street where it crosses the restored Mill River Park. The following was noted.

- It is not determined whether the bridge will be saved.
- The city's numbers are $ 3.0 M to construct a new bridge - $ 4.5 M to restore the historic, state-registered bridge.
- The city would like the historic community to pay for ½ of the estimated "added" cost required to save the bridge. The numbers are; extra cost is $1.5 M above the cost of a new bridge. The city will pay for half of that ($ .75 M) if the historic community can raise $ .75 M.
- Wes Haynes agreed to attempt to raise the additional half of the additional costs. He believes the estimated costs are exorbitant. He recommended that the city obtain bids from firms with bridge preservation experience.
- It was agreed that the engineering department would send out an RFP to firms with bridge preservation experience for an evaluation of the existing trusses for pedestrian, emergency vehicle and dead loads. Preliminary Engineering Level estimates for bridge construction for both bridge superstructures and substructures will be sought.
- . HNPP has access to $ .3 M and $ .1 M from various sources for restoration.
There is concern about the timing of the project. Secured grant funds may expire if not used by the end of next year.
- The engineering methods of reconstruction or restoration are not fully worked out yet. There is some discussion about removing the center supports that were added after the original was constructed. More research is needed.

A motion was made to issue a letter to the zoning board supporting the city's efforts to restore the bridge. The letter should contain

1. Request that HPAC is involved with the selection process for the engineering firm that will do the conditions assessment.
2. Request that HPAC be a part of the committee that will review and manage the tasks of the engineering firm as they proceed.

(The motion was moved by D. Woods, seconded by A. Goslin, and carried unanimously.)

V. Old Business

A. Progress with adoption of by-laws, and application form.

J. Smyth submitted the approved draft of the by-laws to Norman Cole and planning department. A few items were noted.

- J. Smyth will check with Norman Cole on the progress.

- It is understood that the bi-laws will need to be approved by the Board of Reps.
- Marty Levine has reviewed the draft and had a few comments that have been incorporated.
- The HPAC application form and the check list sheet have been forwarded to Norman Cole (Planning) office.
- The city has indicated that the HPAC should continue to operate under the bi-laws even though they have not been approved as of yet.

B. Demolition Notices

The committee has not started to craft the an internal demolition guide.;(volunteered by B. Hersh and E. Kalman)

- B. Hersh noted that the demolition ordinance may not have the right to limit the ability of an owner to demolish a structure, only after an application has been filed with planning & zoning. Some structures may be demolished without a development proposal.
- The draft revisions to the ordinance have not been presented to HPAC of yet.
- L. Drobbin will make a request of the persons drafting the ordinance changes to appear before the HPAC in November. They have already indicated that HPAC will be asked to review the draft.
- E. Kalman will work on the draft of demolition standards and guidelines with B. Hersh before the next meeting

C. Grant sources and opportunities

J. Smyth handed out a “schedule” of grant opportunities that has been developed by W. Haynes and reviewed a meeting in the past few weeks. The following was noted by W. Haynes.

- There are two sources for grants DECD and the CT Trust for Historic Preservation.
- HPEG are small grants with interest in public education and awareness. They are up to $5,000.
- Supplemental CLG grants may support a survey or historic designation reports and municipal historic preservation planning reports. They are up to $30,000.
- CDGB grants are for public education and awareness.
- HRI have grants up to $20,000 for communities, surveys and planning
- HPTAG will support pre-development studies, matching 1 to 1 and up to $20,000.
- VCI Vibrant Communities Initiative support broad community preservation programs where there is a group of various stakeholders. These are available for up to $50,000.

L. Drobbin will contact the Historic Trust and get an idea of issues for Stamford that can be supported. She may be able to get a meeting in Stamford next Tuesday and will alert the group.

W. Haynes indicated that it will be best to start with the CLG grant requests and seek funds for the survey that was discussed earlier. HPAC will need to coordinate that effort with the city’s grants office.

- J Smyth indicated that she will assist with that effort as she has some experience with grant requests.

D. Update & discussion of Stamford master plan.
A. Goslin said that she attended the master plan meeting at the city and submitted the preservation chapter as approved at the last meeting.

- HPAC may request an amendment to the master plan so that more detailed information about historic communities and tools for preservation can be added.

VI. New discussion items, updates

A. Sterling Farms Dressing Room
An addition is planned for the theater annex at Sterling farms. It is understood that the city is required to get approvals from city agencies in order to conduct that work.

- Documents are finished and an RFP has been issued for construction.
- A. Goslin contacted Lou Casolo to request information about the project.
- HPAC will give Lou some time to respond.
- HPAC will seek a presentation of the project at the next meeting.

B. 980 Hope St.
It was determined that this project is not within the scope of HPAC review as it concerns a building that is less than 50 years of age and has no known historic or architectural significance and, also, the neighborhood association is active in reviewing village commercial projects.

C. 467 Glenbrook Road.
It is understood that the development is at the location of a current gas station and will not come before HPAC for review.

D. 200 Strawberry Hill
A demolition notice was issued for two “house” structures at the former Sacred Heart Academy property now owned by the city. The following was noted in discussion.

- The houses are two caretaker cottages from the original McHarg estate, built prior to the construction of the Sacred Heart school. The dates are unknown at this time.
- W. Haynes will file an objection to the demolition notice on Wednesday.
- HPAC should request a review and designation by CT state SHPO.
- HPAC will conduct some initial photo identity and try to establish circa dates to support a SHPO request.
- A. Goslin will request a walk through of the houses from the city as soon as possible.

E. Ferguson Library
The library is seeking to make some changes to their building and has some grant money to proceed. They want to make some changes to their construction plans because of cost; there is some concern about the quality of the construction proposed and the historic details. The following was discussed.

• E. Kalman noted that the library had reviewed the work with her and she has concerns about the quality of the work being proposed.
• W. Haynes has consulted with the library about the columns at the front. It is understood that 1 of the columns is not in good shape and needs to be replaced. The Library may want to replace all of the columns with an alternative that may not relate to the historical character of the originals.
• HPAC review of the library's plans is needed. It may be referred to the commission.
• HPAC will reach out to the library and request that they make a presentation at the next meeting.

F. Vibrant Communities Initiative.
This was discussed as a part of the grant sources opportunities. It was noted that L. Drobbin had contacted Brad Schide of the CT Trust who is willing to explain the process for the Vibrant Communities Initiative grants at the November HPAC meeting. A pre-meeting will also be arranged with Brad, Wes Haynes and the available members of the HPAC, to discuss the issues that confront Stamford today. Several HPAC members indicated that they may be able to attend the pre-meeting which would be held in Stamford during the business day. L. Drobbin will follow-up with Brad, Wes and HPAC to arrange.

G. HPAC website – contact information
A. Goslin noted that the city's website needs to be updated with HPAC information.
A. Goslin will talk with Norman about listing contact information, tand posting bi-laws and applications on the HPAC website.

H. Filing cabinet
A filing cabinet has been set up in the Planning Department and A. Goslin will check on it and will begin to file submitted materials.
L. Drobbin will contact Kathy Emmett to get an opinion on what needs to be saved.

Ms. Goslin adjourned the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Submitted by: David W. Woods AIA secretary – October 29 2014
Stamford, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Meetings are normally on the second Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 pm in the 7th floor conference room, number 7-C. **The next meeting was revised to November 18th due to Veterans' day**