

**Minutes**  
**Watertown Historical Commission**  
**Thursday,**  
**February 11, 2016**  
**Phillip Pane Lower Hearing Room**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Historical Commission Members Present:** David J. Russo, Marilynne K. Roach, Thomas Melone, J.B. Jones, Donald S. Berg

**Member(s) Absent:** Elise Loukas, Susan Steele

**Staff Present:** Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness

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Russo chaired. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with a description of the public hearing process for the Historical Commission (HC) by Russo.

- 1) Public Hearing Continuance - 35 Bacon St. - Request to demolish a 1 family cape style house with a detached garage built around 1880. Proposed is a new construction 2 story town house without a garage. Gerard Mazzeo, applicant/owner**

Mazzeo appeared before the HC for the continuation of the public hearing held on January 14, 2016 on the Application for a Demolition Permit for 35 Bacon St.

The Agent was asked to specify the procedural issues to be addressed at this meeting. Agent Hayward reported that there was no vote that took place last month as to the Historical Preservation of the house, but there was a unanimous vote to continue the public hearing after the site visit that had been taken place on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Russo explained that the house was named the Thomas Rooney House, and that it was a very basic and spare home which was a worker's cottage.

**HC Discussion about Site Visit:**

Melone explained that he saw a house that had belonged to a worker and indeed very plain without beautiful woodwork or detail. He thought the upper level was not completely uninhabitable as described by the owner, but in need of work. He said that the problem here would be figuring out what it would take to make it a good house. He said that a major problem would be the narrow stairway.

Roach said that she found it an odd arrangement that the windows were placed so close to the floor.

Berg noted the additions made onto the rear and the side of the house and said he was sure that there was a way to work constructively with the narrow stairways and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom.

Jones questioned how it would be possible to make a two family home out of this building.

Russo asked HC if they had a motion.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Jones that the house at 35 Bacon St. was preferably preserved. Berg seconded the motion.

**Vote:** There was a unanimous vote that the house at 35 Bacon St. was preferably preserved.

Berg agreed with Jones' comment that a two family would be non-conforming and questioned whether or not a 2 family could be built in this location.

Jones believed it would be possible with a variance.

Melone explained that a 2 family would need parking for four cars.

Russo pointed out that there is a driveway that is proposed to be saved on the right side of the house while a second driveway is being proposed for the left side of the house.

Jones declared that he did not believe that this house rose to the importance of needing to be preserved.

Melone agreed and noted that a substantial cost would be the result of attempting to renovate this home into a single home.

**Motion:** Berg made a motion that the HC would not impose a delay on the demolition of 35 Bacon St. Jones seconded the motion.

**Vote:** A unanimous vote was reached that a delay would not be imposed on the house at 35 Bacon St.

A Letter of Determination will be issued in the Conservation Office as to the decision of the HC.

## **2) Minutes – January 14, 2016**

The January minutes were adopted with minor modification by unanimous vote.

## **3) Old Business**

**a. HC December site visit Branch Libraries continued discussion**

The HC Commission had discussed a second site visit to the Branch Libraries that would include in attendance Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning, and Assistant Town Manager.

Agent Hayward mentioned that Mark Comeiro, the Veteran's Agent wanted to attend and that he would offer insight into the documentation being stored on site at the East Branch.

The dates of February 16<sup>th</sup>, February 19<sup>th</sup> or March 7<sup>th</sup> were all possibilities.

The Agent agreed to follow up after he had polled all parties about the dates and times that would work for interested HC members, Comeiro, and Magoon.

An email will be sent by the Agent to all parties when a date and time have been determined.

**b. 917 Belmont Street – Upkeep and Maintenance discussion based on language of Landmark Ordinance**

In response to recent concerns with the current conditions noticed at the site of 917 Belmont St., members of the HC have been reviewing the signed agreement between the Walker Home and School and the HC. The agreement was entered into on February 27, 2013 and it was agreed upon to extend for a period of ten years from that date.

Agent Hayward had the following developments to report.

Steve Magoon, the Director of Community Development and Planning has been in touch with Mr. Tannenbaum and is currently working through the issues with maintaining the structure and property at 917 Belmont St.

Members of the commission were urged to hold tight while Magoon works out sources of funding to tackle the issues at the house now, and how best to go about bringing the property back into well maintained shape.

**c. CPA Update-**

Melone made an update on the CPA site visit which took place on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Present were council members Piccirilli, Palomba, Falkoff, Woodland and Sideris as well.

The group walked around the pond. Councilor Palomba made a presentation about CPA funding and announced that he was seeking volunteers to help build interest in CPA and efforts at how it would benefit the town of Watertown if voted in. There were roughly 30-35 attendees reported to have participated.

Joyce Kelly, of the Historical Society explained that she had recently attended a workshop on CPA funding. She said that she would be interested in exploring possible programming at the Historical Society to inform residents of the benefits of voting for CPA in Watertown.

At this point, in general, it is understood that if CPA were voted in, a Steering Committee would be formed to explore projects and the town council would be responsible for endorsing them.

It was also discussed by the HC that low income residents and senior citizens are exempt from the increase in taxes that would be allocated towards CPA funding.

The group agreed that it was a very positive “Investment in Watertown” and that all of the communities in Watertown would benefit from CPA funding.

**Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote.**