

Minutes
Watertown Historical Commission
Thursday, September 8, 2016
Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission Members Present: David J. Russo, Marilynne K. Roach, Thomas Melone, J.B. Jones, Elise Loukas

Member(s) Absent: Donald S. Berg, Susan Steele

Staff Present: Christopher, Hayward, Susan C. Jenness

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

1) Discussion with Steve Magoon, Assistant Town Manager and Director of Community Development and Planning.

Steve Magoon was invited to the September 8, 2016 meeting to discuss the status of various topics that are under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission (HC).

917 Belmont St.-

Magoon was asked about the repair work and the condition of the building at 917 Belmont St., currently designated as a Historic Landmark bound by an agreement registered on June 20th, 2016 at the Middlesex District Registry of Deeds.

Magoon said that he has been in contact with the school and was told they are currently reviewing several bids for fixing the floor boards, broken posts and rotted wood. There is one bid he said that seems most likely they will be working with.

Magoon explained that he is also currently working with local vendors who are interested in donating materials and that there is at least one financial backer who would be willing to cover some of the costs of the damages sustained to the building by the accident, and some by normal wear and tear. Home Depot is one of the vendors interested in donating materials. Russo suggested that Sherwin Williams might be willing to donate as well.

Magoon said that the financial donation would go directly to the school while the HC would receive the credit for initiating the work in this project.

Joyce Kelly of the Historical Society who was present requested that Magoon see to it that the windows at the school are repaired to stop water from getting into the building.

Jones asked if anyone knew if the roof leaked. Loukas explained that she would like to try to get some additional resources together to apply toward restoration of the building and a more thorough assessment of the building would help them get on that path. Loukas suggested to Magoon that it would be helpful if at least some members of the HC would be allowed to go on a site visit to take a closer look at the building in a group. Magoon agreed that it sounded like a good idea and said he would look into arranging it for them.

Town Councilor Vincent Piccirilli said that he approached the staff at 917 Belmont St. and asked how he could be of assistance to them. He outlined his understanding of the situation as three pronged. The first prong would be evaluating what is needed to repair the school, and how do we maintain the building moving forward. The second prong was evaluating how to use the building in the future and find the ideal tenants? The third prong was evaluating how do we take it upon ourselves to find grants that this building would be eligible for?

Magoon said he will look into getting a consultant for protection in the long term in 2 steps and that his first would be on addressing what is needed now. He told the HC he would look into a future site visit for interested HC members.

Athena Health-

Magoon explained that the West end of the campus will have some impacts that should come to the Historical Commission for comments. He explained that a Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) filing is due the next day and that all HC members would be invited to comment to that.

Russo explained that Athena is planning on coming to the October Historical Commission Meeting and at this time he was not sure that comments would be invited through Mass Historical.

Hayward explained that procedurally, Athena is waiting for comments to the Expanded Environmental Notification Form, and they will contact us for comments once that has been completed.

Magoon and Russo discussed that Arsenal Park is under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission (CC) and that because Arsenal Park might call for removal of paths or courts, Magoon suggested that someone from the HC might want to attend the community meetings to get more details about that.

The Current Role of the Historical Commission and the Demolition Delay Ordinance

Magoon discussed the demolition delay process which he said was written to protect the historic nature of the buildings of Watertown that are over 50 years of age and facing demolition for future development. He explained that while there is currently an ongoing discussion about expanding the delay period available in the ordinance in the future, the current delay period is now for up to a one year period.

Magoon applauded the work and effort of the members of the HC and thanked them all for focusing on protection of the buildings. He said that they would wait and see what the outcome of the current discussions will be around expanding the delay period in the future, and what impacts that may or may not have on the role of the HC in the future.

Minutes August 11, 2016-

After a brief discussion a vote on the minutes from the August 11, 2016 meeting was continued to the October 13, 2016 meeting.

Motion: Loukas made a motion to continue the vote on the August 11, 2016 minutes. Jones seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to continue the vote on the August 11, 2016 minutes to the October 13, 2016 meeting.

Agent Comments

Hayward reminded the HC that Athena is expected to be on the agenda for the October 13, 2016 meeting.

Meeting adjourned.