



Appointments & Briefings

April 9, 2013 – 7:00 PM – **Minutes**

City Council Chamber, Room 214, Municipal Building

****View Agenda ****

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS

DATE: APRIL 9, 2013

TIME: 7:05 P.M.

PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DENIS LAWRENCE, JR., CHAIRMAN; DAVID ALVES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; DEBORA COELHO (7:10); BRUCE DUARTE, JR.; JANE GONSALVES; JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS; JAMES OLIVEIRA; JOHN SAUNDERS

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS HENRY BOUSQUET; BRIAN GOMES

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Councillor Lawrence called the Appointments & Briefings Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. Memos from Councillors Bousquet and Gomes were read into the record stating they would not be in attendance due to prior commitment and an illness. These Communications were received and placed on file on a motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Lopes.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: COMFORT STATION LOCATED AT 170 COVE STREET, MAP 20, PARCEL 139, advising that “the structure is not located in a National Register Historic District or a Local Historic District, but is eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the structure is significant in that other than the Buttonwood Park Comfort Station, it is the only existing Comfort Station built for that specific purpose and is closely associated with the social and cultural history of the City;” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that the Comfort Station at 170 Cove Street is a historically significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 12/20/12, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (1)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Ann Louro, Preservation Planner, provided an overview of the property. She stated that she believes the interior of the building is beyond reasonable rehabilitation, but there is approximately \$50,000 worth of slate in the building that the city would like to remove before it is demolished.

No one spoke in favor of demolition. Being recorded in favor of demolition was Ms. Pamela St. Louis of 27 Stapleton Street, New Bedford, MA.

No one spoke or was recorded in opposition to demolition.

The Chair closed the hearing.

Councillor Saunders asked how the city was going to pay for the demolition. John Perry from DPF stated that, through conversations with Danny Romanowicz, it is estimated to cost between \$62,000 and \$100,000 to demolish the building, not counting asbestos removal costs. He stated that this money is not presently in the DPF budget.

Councillor Saunders stressed that nothing inside the building should be sold to outside bidders until the City Property Committee receives at least 3 bids and provides official approval.

On motion by Councillor Saunders and seconded by Councillor Gonsalves, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action on the Building Demolition Review of the COMFORT STATION LOCATED AT 170 COVE STREET, MAP 20, PARCEL 139. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Item numbers eight (8) and nine (9) were taken out of order with no objections.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a Communication/Demolition, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 4499 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 137, PARCEL 171, SASSAQUIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING – advising that “built in 1924, the structure is a Neo-Classical two and one half-story red brick building with a side gable and several ells in the rear, originally the building had a two story columned portico balustrades, no longer extant; designed by the well known local architectural firm of C. Hammond and Sons, the building retains its classical pilasters and triangular pediment with a Palladian style window; the subject structure is found to be historically significant; while in fair condition, it is not feasible to modify the structure to meet the current Building Code, including making the building ADA accessible; and therefore, the NBHC has determined that 4499 Acushnet Avenue – Sassaquin Administration Building is historically significant structure and not preferably preserved” (Ref’d 2/14/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) (8)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Ann Louro, Preservation Planner, provided an overview, stating that this building is the largest on this specific site and the applicant would like to demolish this and the other building in order to create more parking spaces. She stated that the building is in pristine condition, but its ability to be repurposed in this day and age is admittedly difficult, particularly when its far north end location is taken into account.

Attorney Chris Saunders, representing his client the applicant, stated that this building has been vacant for over 10 years, is not ADA compliant, nor will it ever be. He stated that his client would like to add parking spaces in order to do his best to conform to city code.

No one spoke or was recorded either in favor or opposition and the hearing was closed.

On motion by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Gonsalves, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action on the Building Demolition Review of 4499 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 137, PARCEL 171, SASSAQUIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a Communication/Demolition, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re; BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW; 4499 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 137, PARCEL 171, SASSAQUIN ASSEMBLY HALL – advising that “built in 1914, the structure is one and one half-story wood framed building built in the Craftsman style, it has a cross gable roof with a prominent entry porch on the gable end and the Palladian style window above; typical of the Craftsman style, the building has projecting eaves with rafter tails and paired windows: the interior has an open floor plan with a raised stage at the rear of the building and wood floors, plaster walls and exposed cross-braced beams with a wood tongue and groove pitched ceiling; the subject structure is found to be historically significant; the building is in good condition, having been maintained by the owner; City Departments and City Preservation Organizations will be working cooperatively with he property owner to develop ideas and strategies for the reuse of the building; and therefore, the NBHC has determined that 4499 Acushnet Avenue –Sassaquin Assembly Hall is historically significant structure and is

preferably preserved” (Ref’d 2/14/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins. (9)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Ann Louro, Preservation Planner, provided an overview of the property, stating that it is in very good condition and that the NBHC is asking to delay this demo in order to give them time to seek out a potential buyer who may be interested in moving the building. She submitted a letter from WHALE, which was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Duarte.

Attorney Saunders stated that this building has been vacant for over 16 years because there is no real use for the type of building that it is. He said the expense to move the building alone is prohibitive, particularly when you look at how far it would have to be moved in order to find a conforming parcel of land for such a building. He asked that the City Council vote to allow the demolition as soon as possible, without further delay.

No one spoke or wished to be recorded in favor or opposition and the hearing was closed.

On motion by Councillor Gonsalves and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action on the Building Demolition Review of 4499 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 137, PARCEL 171, SASSAQUIN ASSEMBLY HALL. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Item number seven (7) was taken out of order without objection.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 929-937 BROCK AVENUE, MAP 15 PARCEL 176, advising that “built circa 1908, the property consists of two highly stylized tenement buildings, with prominent architecture anchoring an important corner location constructed during the height of textile manufacturing, the building represent the architectural development of mill tenements and the small businesses which were established to accommodate the large population of mill workers; the structure is in poor condition due to extensive deferred maintenance, however due to the lack of a development plan or proposed re-use of the property, the NBHC determined the property to be preferably preserved;” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that 929-937 Brock Avenue is a historically significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (7)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, provided an overview by stating that this building, at one time was “spectacular”. However, it is now an issue of concern to the neighborhood due to the problems it has had of late. While the city does not own the lot, she said it would pursue ownership in order to assure proper re-use of the land. She said the rehab costs are far too great – over \$2,800, 000. She continued to say that the city has the right to demolish buildings in order to make them “safe” according to MGL, and she feels that would apply in this situation. She said the city would work with the neighborhood in order to determine how the lot would best be used after the demolition is complete.

Councillor Lopes stated that, as the Councillor representing that area, he would rather have a vacant lot at this location than this building remaining in its current condition.

Mrs. Loretta Burke spoke in favor of the demolition, saying that “this derelict building should come down.”

No one else spoke in favor or was recorded in favor or opposition and the hearing was closed by the Chair.

On motion by Councillor Gonsalves and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action regarding the Building Demolition Review for 929-937 BROCK AVENUE, MAP 15 PARCEL 176. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On the question, Councillor Saunders asked Dan Romanowicz, DPI Commissioner, how much this will cost to demolish. Mr. Romanowicz stated that it would cost approximately \$90,000 or more as it has asbestos and oil tanks that would need to be removed.

On a Related Motion by Councillor Saunders and seconded by Councillor Duarte, the Committee VOTED: That the Committee on Appointments & Briefings ask Dan Romanowicz to solicit demolition bids and provide that information to the City Council prior to it taking a vote on whether or not to delay the demolition of this building. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 6, Nays 1, with Councillor Lopes opposed and Councillors Lawrence & Oliveira not present for vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 523-525 PURCHASE STREET, MAP 41, PARCEL 40, advising that “a pre 1830 one and one-half story gable end Greek Revival with a rear ell, retaining splayed lintels from the preceding Federal period as well as its original six over six double-hung windows, its full height stone foundation is non typical or extant in New Bedford; in the nineteenth century, maritime manufacturing become centralized along the waterfront and the areas around the edges of the village become important residential locations for the working waterfront and the areas around the edges of the village become important residential locations for the working middle class, in 1838 this property was owned by Zacheus Cushman a sail maker employed on Rodman Street in the heart of the maritime district; this property is located in the County Street National Register District,” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that 523-525 Purchase Street is a historically significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (2)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, stated that this is one of the oldest buildings in that area of the city and is very historically significant. It can very likely be rehabbed very quickly as well, and should be preserved.

A letter from Attorney Kimberly Moses-Smith was read into the record and received and placed on file by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Lopes.

Diane Henry, Chairperson of the Historical Commission added that she feels that in time this building can be purchased and rehabbed.

Anne Louro stated that approximately \$60,000 in back taxes are owed on this property, but the city can waive half of that for any potential buyer, and WHALE has committed \$10,000 to a buyer for the purpose of refinishing the façade and providing tech services as well.

No one spoke or was recorded in favor of demolition.

Mr. Deraman Costa of 312 Pleasant Street, spoke in opposition to the demolition. No one was recorded in opposition and the hearing was closed.

On motion by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action on the Building Demolition Review of 523-525 PURCHASE STREET, MAP 41, PARCEL 40. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 5 TALLMAN LANE, MAP 37, PARCEL 276, advising that “a circa 1882 three-story tenement style building that retains much of its Victorian style characteristics, such as its cross-gable, full height bay with patterned shingles and corner brackets; located in a dense part of the City, just south of Downtown; during the mid to late 19th Century, the village center expanded north and southward to accommodate a growing population and the demand of manufacturing employment; the structure is in poor condition due to extensive deferred maintenance, however due to the lack of a development plan or proposed re-use of the property, the NBHC determined the property to be preferably preserved,” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that 5 Tallman Lane is a historically significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Lopes. (3)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, stated that this was at one time a great building and is a rare Victorian-style 3-tenement home. However, it is now in very poor condition and is a fire hazard for the area. The owner has tried to market and sell it without success.

No one spoke or wished to be recorded either in favor or opposition. The hearing was closed.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action on the Building Demolition Review of 5 TALLMAN LANE, MAP 37, PARCEL 276. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 130 TALLMAN STREET, MAP 92, PARCEL 246, advising that “a circa 1910 three-story tenement style building with a hipped roof and cross-gable, full height bay; two thirds of the City’s housing stock consists of tenement buildings built to accommodate the large immigrant population employed by the burgeoning textile industry; located in the rear of this property is a wood framed car barn with a hayloft style window above two sets of wooden cross-braced double doors, few of this style exist in the City, the car barns has been identified as endangered historic resources within the City and at risk of loss;” and therefore the NBHC has determined that 130 Tallman Street is historically significant and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Gonsalves and seconded by Councillor Coelho. (4)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Councillor Alves asked that, if 2/3 of the city looks like this building, why is it so historically significant? Anne Louro answered that the NBHC looks at reuse plans as well when making decisions and they are concerned about a vacant lot being there instead of a building.

No one spoke in favor or opposition, and neither did anyone wish to be recorded either way. The hearing was then closed.

On motion by Councillor Coelho and seconded by Councillor Martins, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action of the Building Demolition Review of 130 TALLMAN STREET, MAP 92, PARCEL 246. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Items five (5) and six (6) were taken up together without objection.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 153 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 37, PARCEL 6, advising that “a circa 1882 two and one-half story Italianate style residence characterized y a two story, triple window bay, as well as a two window bay above an off center entrance; located in a dense part of the City, just south of Downtown, these were the modest properties that housed whalers and workers employed at the nearby oil works, candle works and Pairpoint Glass Company; the structure has vinyl siding and replacement windows, however, due to the lack of a development plan or proposed re-use of the property, the NBHC determined the property to be preferably preserved;” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that 153 Acushnet Avenue is a historically significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Duarte. (5)

Notice, City Clerk of referenced of a Public Hearing on a COMMUNICATION/DEMOLITION, New Bedford Historical Commission, to City Council, re: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: 147 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 37, PARCEL 12, advising that “a circa 1876 two and one-half Italianate style building; located in a dense part of the City, just south of Downtown, these were the modest properties that housed whalers and workers employed at the nearby oil works, candle works, and Pairpoint Glass Company; the structure has vinyl siding and replacement windows, however, due to the lack of a development plan or proposed re-use of the property, the NBHC determined the property to be preferably preserved;” and therefore, “the NBHC has determined that 147 Acushnet Avenue is a historical significant structure and preferably preserved” (Ref’d 1/24/13, Advertised in the Standard-Times 3/27/13) was received and placed on file by Councillor Martins and seconded by Councillor Duarte. (6)

The Chair opened the hearing.

Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, stated that if all of these properties are demolished, there would be a large vacant lot on Acushnet Avenue, which could potentially be a good thing if thoughtful planning is done regarding the reuse plan. She stated that there are concerns with these buildings, as copper has already been stolen from the basement and gangs have defiled the building in several ways.

No one spoke or wished to be recorded in favor or opposition. The hearing was then closed.

On motion by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Coelho, the Committee VOTED: To refer to the City Council for action of the Building Demolition Review of 153 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 37, PARCEL 6. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Duarte and seconded by Councillor Coelho, the Committee VOTED; To refer to the City Council for action of the Building Demolition Review of 147 ACUSHNET AVENUE, MAP 37, PARCEL 12. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Councillor Coelho made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Duarte.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:38 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees