



New Bedford Historical Commission

July 13, 2015 – 6:00 PM - **Minutes**

Ashley Room, City Hall, 133 William Street New Bedford, MA

Members Present:

Diana Henry, Chairman
Bill King, Vice Chairman
Bill Barr
Janine da Silva
James Lopes
Jill Maclean
Corey Pacheco

Members Absent:

Keri Cox

Secretary:

Anne Louro

1. Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., confirming a quorum. The Chair indicated that Lopes would serve in the primary Historical Organization position held by the absent K. Cox.

2. Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the 06.01.15 meeting as written was moved by B. Barr and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed. The reading of the minutes was waived.

3. PUBLIC HEARING: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

A motion to take the partial demolition of 597--603 Brock Avenue, Hazelwood Park... circa 1854 Coffin-Howland House out of order was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- **Partial Demolition of 597--603 Brock Avenue, Hazelwood Park... circa 1854 Coffin-Howland House**
A. Louro presented the information to the Commission, explaining that the northern, wood framed portion of the structure had suffered from arson and had deteriorated to the point that it was beyond rehabilitation. She also explained that she and DFFM staff had previously documented the structure through photographs and measurements. She explained that the remaining southern, stucco portion would be secured from the weather and rehabilitated when funding became available. She also provided a brief history of the property.

A motion to open the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comments in favor:

- ❖ Gary Moraes of 76 Valentine Street stated that his house abuts the property and that the structure is a safety issue and asked that City do something about the remaining portion, at least paint it so that it would not be an eyesore.

- ❖ Councilor Joe Lopes stated that he has worked with many city departments regarding the Coffin-Howland House and the City has not done anything regarding the building. Mr. Lopes also stated that the southern portion did not have any historical value. Mr. Lopes stated that the entire structure should be demolished and reuse the site.
- ❖ John Anthony of 9 Valentine Street complained about the number of years that the neighborhood had to endure the eyesore of the dilapidated buildings and did not feel the City had the capacity or will to repair the remaining structure; and asked for the entire structure to be demolished and grass to be planted.

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor: Roger Bernier 13 Valentine St, who was the last painter on building stated that the park needs latrine and that the City should knock down entire building.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

A motion to suspend the public hearing was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

C. Pacheco asked if it was possible to salvage materials. A. Louro stated that some of the verge board has been removed and could serve as a template for future rehabilitation. J. Lopes discussed the process in which the City allows these types of properties to deteriorate. He stated that the City needs a strategy and it is sad that it has to come down.

A motion to close the public hearing was moved by J. Maclean and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A. Louro reminded the members that the application that they were considering was for the partial demolition of the north portion of the structure only; and although the public comments suggested a full demolition, that was not within their purview at this time. She also stated that both sections of the structure were historically and architecturally significant.

A motion to find the Coffin-Howland to be a historically significant structure but not preferably preserved was moved by B. King. J. Maclean seconded with the addition of a friendly amendment that the City would reach out to the neighbors and greater community to determine their thoughts on the potential consideration of demolition of the entire building.

A roll call was taken:

B. King yes

B. Barr no

J. da Silva yes

J. Lopes yes

J. Maclean yes

C. Pacheco yes

The motion passed five to one.

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- **Front Street Plaza...temporary artwork**

A. Louro presented the application to the members explaining that there were two pieces of temporary artwork that were part of the seasonal Seaport Artwalk project. The locations were at Centre and Front Streets and Union and Front Streets. The art pieces are to be removed in October. There was brief discussion amongst members centered on the fact that the City continually does not adhere to the application process within the 40C District.

A motion to open the public hearing was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in

favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None.

Public comments not in favor: None.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

A motion to suspend the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. King. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Brief discussion took place amongst the members regarding the removal date and whether there were other pieces within the Seaport Artwalk that were within the District. A. Louro explained that the boundaries of the 40C District will be better clarified as a result of an amended NRHD currently taking place and that the two art pieces before them are located west of the JFK Boulevard.

A motion to close the public hearing was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the existing temporary artwork to be removed in Oct 2015 for Front Street Plaza as presented was moved by J. Maclean with condition that future artwork have separate applications prior to installation and seconded by B. King.

A roll call was taken:

B. King **yes**

B. Barr **yes**

J. da Silva **yes**

J. Lopes **yes**

J. Maclean **yes**

C. Pacheco **no**

The motion passed five to one.

- **31 Union Street...new signage**

Vanessa Kollars of 67 Orleans Street presented the application. She explained that the ZBA conditioned the approval of the business that the sign must be flush to the building. She also explained that the design of the sign is sympathetic to the historic building and that the black and gold design is in keeping with other signs within the downtown historic district.

A motion to open the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. King. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: Joe Lopes

Public comments not in favor: None.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

A motion to close the public hearing was moved by B. Barr and seconded by J. Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A motion to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign at 31 Union Street was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. Barr. A roll call was taken and the motion passed unanimously 5-0.

- **392 Acushnet Ave...new signage**

Richard Poyant of Poyant Signs presented the application. Mr. Poyant explained the intent to install a two sided banner and relocating the bottom pole to accommodate size of banner. He noted that it was

a simple design to identify a multi-tenant building. B Barr asked if there was an intention to have future individual banners for commercial tenants. Mr. Poyant explained that the banner is for identification of the building and that he did not believe that the individual tenants were to have banners or signs.

A motion to open the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J. Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor: None.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

A motion to suspend the public hearing was moved by J. Lopes and seconded by B. King. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

There was brief discussion amongst members regarding the size of the banner and A. Louro asked Mr. Poyant to remove the existing broken and unused banner poles on the northern side of the N Second Street façade. B. Barr suggested that if the banner was approved that no other signage should be allowed on the building. A. Louro noted that the building has two “front” facades, and that the Acushnet Avenue façade may require some type of signage in the future. J. Maclean stated that there is the opportunity to review any and all future signage requests. J. da Silva noted that a Directory Sign existed near the Dover Street entrance.

A motion to close the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J. Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A motion to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness for the banner at 392 Acushnet Ave as presented was moved by J. da Silva with the condition that applicant remove any damaged and unused brackets and that there would be no further signage in addition to the approved banner allowed on the N. Second Street façade while it was in place. The motion was seconded by B. Barr.

A roll call was taken:

B. King yes

B. Barr yes

J. da Silva yes

J. Lopes yes

J. Maclean no

C. Pacheco yes

The motion passed five to one.

- **15-16 Johnny Cake Hill....exterior rehabilitation and new construction**

B. King recused himself and left the meeting, as he is a member of the Board of Managers of the Port Society. C. Pacheco & D. Henry disclosed that they are WHALe board members of which Whale is a consultant on the project.

Fred Toomey, President of the Port Society and Teri Bernert, Director of WHALe presented the application and initially noted that they have received their final approvals from the NPS and MHC. Both NPS and MHC have reviewed and commented on the design of the new construction and the rehabilitation of both the Seaman’s Bethel and the Mariner’s Home. J. Lopes inquired whether the Fishing Heritage Center was planning on using the space. Ms. Bernert indicated that a fishing museum would be located within the Bethel with a design and simple exhibits which would not require interior modifications. J. da Silva asked about the use of aluminum-clad windows which are specified in the

plans. Mr. Toomey stated that all of the new windows would be wood-framed windows. Ms. Bernert stated that MHC had executed an extensive review of the materials on both the interior and exterior of the building and had approved the windows.

A motion to open the public hearing was moved by J. Lopes and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: Councilor Joe Lopes wished to be recognized in favor.

Public comments not in favor: None.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

A motion to close the public hearing was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J. Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

C Pacheco was opposed to the differentiation of materials between the buildings and the use of extensive glazing in the link. He felt that modern material usage was too much of a contrast for such iconic buildings. Mr. Toomey referred to the similarity to the Corson Building link which is precedent. J. da Silva referenced the dual interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the requirement to distinguish between old and new. She noted that there is the ability to differentiate between original and new by the use of materials. B. Barr sought to retain a sense of 'charm' by not having a modern aesthetic within the District. A. Louro noted that the Secretary of the Interior Standards seeks distinction and contrast so that new construction is not deceitful or misleading. She also emphasized that the project has been reviewed and scrutinized by both the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Park Service, who use the Secretary's Guidelines; and the NBHC in its review and decision making also follows the same guidelines. B. Barr asked about the elevator shaft site lines. A. Louro stated that she made a site visit and walked on the sidewalk of Johnny Cake Hill across from the Mariner's Home and felt that the flat elevation drawing is deceiving, and that the elevator shaft will not be visible from the public way due to the narrow width of Johnny Cake Hill. It will be visible from N. Second Street. Mr. Toomey noted that MHC's concerns regarding site lines were specific to Johnny Cake Hill. J. Maclean stated that change in buildings to accommodate new uses is critical in the preservation and continued use of these resources.

A motion to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Approval for the exterior rehabilitation and new construction at 13-15 Johnny Cake Hill and to incorporate any recommendations submitted by the MHC and NPS as it relates to the elevator addition and connector link between the Seaman's Bethel and Mariner's Home with condition that applicant work with staff on the selection of new windows and shingles and for the applicant to submit a revised set of plans demonstrating current changes was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J. Maclean.

A roll call was taken:

B. King yes

B. Barr no

J. da Silva yes

J. Lopes yes

J. Maclean yes

C. Pacheco no

The motion passed four to two.

4. Old Business:

• **70 N. Second Street granite pyramids**

Members voiced concern that the existing ball finials had not been removed. J. Maclean informed the

body that she had spoken to Ms. Pepin and that a mock-up of the granite pyramid was being developed and that she would be in touch to schedule a site visit.

Pier 37 & Consistency

B. Barr asked if the planters that were placed on the sidewalk as part of the Outdoor Café Seating were the same that were approved by the Commission. A. Louro indicated that they were. B. Barr asked if the City had developed a furniture design option for the District as was requested at an earlier meeting. J. Maclean stated that the City could offer two or three options, however she was reluctant to do so due to the variety of architecture and buildings within the District. D. Henry disagreed and preferred some type of consistency with the outdoor furniture. A. Louro stated that the matter was mute at this point, as it could wait until next spring, when that new Outdoor Café Seating season begins.

The Landing Sign

A. Louro stated that she spoke to the owner and they are waiting for it to be manufactured.

Whaler's Tavern Sign

A. Louro stated that she spoke to the owner and that the temporary sign would be removed.

5. New Business:

None

6. Communications:

None

7. Date of Next Meeting: The next regular commission meeting was scheduled for 08.03.15.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by J. Maclean. All voted in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Louro

Secretary to the commission

Approved: 09.14.15