



New Bedford Historical Commission

January 4, 2016 – 6:00 PM - **Minutes**

Room 314, City Hall, 133 William Street New Bedford, MA

Members Present:

Diana Henry, Chairman
Jennifer Clarke
James Lopes
Meaghan Kish

Members Absent:

Keri Cox
Janine da Silva
Corey Pacheco

Secretary:

Anne Louro

Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m., confirming a quorum. The Chair indicated that J. Clarke would serve in the primary Planning Division position and M. Kish would serve in the primary National Park Service position.

1. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2015 and December 7, 2016 minutes with any necessary corrections. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by J. Clarke.
The motion passed unanimously, 4 – 0.

2. Public Hearing: Application for Demolition

255 River Rd. (Map 119, Lot 94)

Abilio Fernandes

Request to demolish a circa pre-1800 wood framed structure.

Mr. Fernandes presented his request to the commission explaining that he purchased the property for investment purposes, with plans to develop a financially feasible project which would require the removal of the unsafe property, which he stated is blight to the neighborhood. Discussion regarding the structural integrity ensued with the applicant stating that parts of the roof have collapsed, that asbestos was present in the roof and wall shingles, that the structure is unsafe, and that nothing could be salvaged.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by M. Kish.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor:

Barry Saucier, an abutter stated that he was not in favor of the proposed demolition and described how he had restored several abutting properties in the adjacent Head of the River

National Register District and expressed his desire to have the barn incorporated into Mr. Fernandes development. Mr. Saucier disagreed with Mr. Fernandes assessment of the property and thought that the barn portion of the structure could be restored.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by J. Clarke and seconded by M. Kish
Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Members discussed the existing building code violations with A. Louro explaining that the 20th century additions have collapsed, are the source of the property's building code violations, and are beyond rehabilitation. A. Louro stated that the building additions were attached to the barn in a manner that altered the barn's support joists, and could not be removed easily without affecting the barn's structural support system. A. Louro also stated that the current barn foundation is currently being supported by wooden posts and that the level of rehabilitation required for the barn to comply with the building code and for an adaptive reuse would be extensive.

MOTION: To send a recommendation to the City Council that the structure at 255 River Road is Historically Significant, but is not a Preferably Preserved structure. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by M. Kish.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

3. Old Business:

89 N Water Street (Map 53, Lot 102)

Modification of Certificate of Appropriateness: Fence Installation.

A. Louro briefly explained that the applicant was seeking to have the fence height modified from the 8' height to 6' height due to higher costs and availability. The applicant was not in attendance and there was not a quorum of members present who heard the initial application at the December 2015 meeting.

MOTION to table the matter. Moved by J. Clarke and seconded by M. Kish.

4. New Business:

18 Johnny Cake Hill: Preliminary review of planned exterior projects.

James Russell, President and CEO of the Whaling Museum, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the commission demonstrating the Museum's conceptual plans for the redevelopment of the Bourne Courtyard, located on Johnny Cake Hill at the entrance to the new Wattles Jacobs Education Center. The existing HVAC unit which is located adjacent to the Bourne Building within the courtyard will be removed and replaced with two rooftop units. Mr. Russell reviewed a depiction of the proposed location of the new HVAC units, one on the roof of the Bank Building, and the other on the roof of the theatre. Neither unit appeared as if it would be visible from the public way, however the ductwork plan had not yet been developed.

Mr. Russell reviewed the proposed scope of work for the courtyard which would include fencing the perimeter, realigning pavers within the Captain Paul Cuffe Park, the addition of a door entrance canopy at the Union Street entrance of the education center, and the development of a display wall on the Sundial Building. Discussion focused on the rubble wall which separates the differing elevations of the property. Mr. Russell suggested that the wall would be reinforced with new concrete and the original stones used on the face. There was discussion regarding the grade differentiation of the property along Johnny Cake Hill and the need to raise the grade in an effort to create a substantial green space within the courtyard. Mr. Russell presented several versions of potential courtyard layouts with the addition of formal staircases to the Bourne Building and access stairs into the courtyard, with the caveat that they were preliminary plans. The addition of

sculpture and lighting was also presented with the desire to program and activate the courtyard space for public uses. More detailed discussion took place regarding projection opportunities onto the blank wall of the Sundial Building. A phased timeline was discussed, with plans developed for the rooftop HVAC units first, then Cuffe Park specifics, and finally the Bourne Courtyard by the spring.

The Chair thanked Mr. Russell for his presentation and indicated that the commission was looking forward to reviewing the final plans once they were completed.

5. Communications:

None

6. Date of Next Meeting: The next regular commission meeting was scheduled for February 1, 2016

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by J. Lopes and seconded by C. Pacheco. All voted in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7.10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro

Secretary to the Historical Commission

Approved: 05.02.16