



New Bedford Historical Commission

February 1, 2016 – 6:00 PM - **Minutes**

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

Members Present:

Bill King, Vice Chair
Jennifer Clarke
Meghan Kish 6:26 PM
James Lopes
Corey Pacheco

Members Absent:

Diana Henry, Chairman
Keri Cox
Janine da Silva

Secretary:

Anne Louro

Call to Order:

B. King called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM, confirming a quorum. The Vice Chair indicated that J. Clarke would serve in the primary Planning Division position, M. Kish would serve in the primary National Park Service position, and J. Lopes would serve in the primary Historical Organization position.

Approval of Minutes:

The Vice Chair indicated that the January meeting minutes were not available and would be accepted at the March meeting.

Public Hearing: Certificate of Appropriateness

38 Bethel Street (Map 53, Lot 103)

Replacement windows and new paint

Ben and Deborah Baker presented their application to the commission and explained that the current sheet glass windows at the storefront level required replacement with tempered safety glass to accommodate a new tenant. However, due to manufacturer limitation in the size of tempered glass, full tempered glass sheets are unavailable to fit the original window openings, necessitating the use of custom window mouldings in a configuration to meet the available size of tempered glass. The applicant also proposed changing the paint color on all of the exposed wood on the Bethel Street façade to better match the existing windows on the N Water Street of the building.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by C. Pacheco.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor:

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by J. Clarke

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Members discussed the application. J. Clarke suggested that the proposed flat window mouldings have some type of relief to provide shadow and definition. A. Louro indicated that she had spoken to the project's contractor and that he was amenable to working with her to develop an appropriate moulding detail. There was discussion regarding the alternative use of a custom fixed window replacement with simulated divided lites to replicate the original window design. Cost differentials were briefly discussed and C. Pacheco urged the applicant to consider a work plan to provide uniformity to the façade as windows are replaced in the future. There was consensus that the proposed paint color of Benjamin Moore, Lafayette Green was an acceptable paint color for the building.

MOTION to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

- 1). **That an additional moulding strip be added to the glass dividers to provide shadow and relief;**
- 2). **That the applicants are encouraged to develop an overall window replacement plan which would better replicate the documented original windows;**
- 3). **That the paint color as presented be approved as part of the application.**

Moved by J. Clarke and seconded by J. Lopes

Motion passed 3 to 1 on a roll call vote.

J. Clarke	yes
J. Lopes	yes
B. King	yes
C. Pacheco	no

MOTION to take Old Business out of order. Moved by C. Pacheco and seconded by J. Clarke

Old Business:

89 N Water Street (Map 53, Lot 102)

Modification to Certificate of Appropriateness: Fence Installation.

Doug and Claudia Mills presented their application to modify a previously-granted Certificate of Appropriateness granted in December 2015 to allow for a six foot height fence, in place of the approved eight foot height fence due to higher costs and limited stock availability associated with eight foot fencing. There was brief discussion regarding the existing chain link fence screening a mechanical unit in the rear of the courtyard and whether or not an eight foot high cedar fence was necessary to screen the view of that chain link fence. Mr. Mills reiterated that the purpose of the cedar fence was to screen the existing dumpster and barrels in the forefront of the courtyard, and he felt that the six foot high fence was adequate. Mr. Mills also noted that he would locate the fence approximately one foot off of the adjacent building and would work with the adjacent property owner regarding that matter.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by C. Pacheco and seconded by J. Clarke.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor:

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by J. Clarke and seconded by C. Pacheco

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Members discussed the intent of the height modification and concluded that a six foot high fence was adequate screening in the proposed location, set back twenty five feet from the sidewalk.

MOTION to approve the modified application to reduce the height of the fence from eight feet to six feet. Moved by C. Pacheco and seconded by J. Lopes.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

18 Johnny Cake Hill (Map 53, Lot 161)

Installation of Rooftop HVAC system

The Vice Chair made note that based on staff review and recommendation, the applicant has withdrawn their application for a Certificate of Appropriateness without prejudice as it was deemed unnecessary as the proposed work would not be visible from the public right of way, but has extended to the commission the courtesy of briefly presenting their HVAC project plan.

Michelle Taylor, Vice President, Operations and CFO of the Whaling Museum, Brian Southerland and Jim Avitabile of Commercial Construction Consulting presented an overview of the installation of two rooftop HVAC units at the Whaling Museum and provided to the commission copies of the most up to date mechanical plans which were prepared that day. Mr. Southerland and Mr. Avitabile, the HVAC consultants, briefly explained the need for the HVAC replacement and the requirement of placing a new unit in the “well” which exists on the roof of the Bank Building, between the Bourne and the Wood Buildings.

Although previous design and calculations indicated that the new HVAC unit would not be visible from the public way, the consultants revealed that new calculations demonstrate that the new unit would be minimally visible from the Whaling Museum Plaza and William Street, in the location where the roofs of the Jacobs Gallery and Wood Building meet. Mr. Southerland indicated that the unit would be seven feet high and constructed of galvanized sheet metal. There was brief discussion of potential view points and possible screening options that would match the existing architectural details of the building complex. J. Clarke voiced concern that any type of potential screening would need to be set back from the building facades and be separate and distinct in its architectural design. Mr. Avitabile stated that screening may not be necessary, as they would be recalculating the pump sizes which may reduce the size of the rooftop HVAC unit. C. Pacheco stated that if it is determined that screening is necessary to block the view of the HVAC, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness would be necessary for the commission to review the screening proposal. Mr. Avitabile indicated that they would be able to provide to the commission definitive sightline views from the plaza to demonstrate whether the HVAC unit would be visible or not. A. Louro affirmed that the consultants would recalculate the size of the discussed HVAC unit to determine its visibility, would develop sightline drawings, and if screening was necessary, would alert staff in order to schedule a hearing to review an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. There was consensus that the second HVAC unit to be located on the theater rooftop would not be visible from the public way.

New Business:

141 William Street, First Baptist Church

Review: Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse in preparation of submittal to the State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.

The Vice Chair explained to the commission members that the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) is working with the First Baptist Church and Your Theatre in planning and executing the adaptive reuse of the church as a theatre. WHALE has submitted a Historic Tax Credit Application to MHC and is seeking to familiarize members with the project and formerly gain the support of the

Commission.

Teri Bernert, Director of the WHALE and Gil Cardona-Erazo, a member of Your Theatre were present to address the commission. Ms. Bernert initially updated the members on the project at 139-141 Union Street, which the commission reviewed at its December meeting. Ms. Bernert indicated that the proposed awnings were removed from the plan and there was a substitution of clapboard siding in place of the proposed cement fiber board siding in order to make the tax credit application stronger.

Ms. Bernert then updated members on the planning activities associated with the adaptive reuse of the First Baptist Church for the use of Your Theatre, which has included a feasibility study, full architectural and engineering plans, consultation with the state architectural access board and the accumulation of funding, which includes state historic tax credits. Ms. Bernert stated that due to the Church's status as a National Treasure from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the existence of a preservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the seeking of historic tax credits, that minimal changes would occur to the exterior of the church.

Ms. Bernert indicated that the exterior would be fully restored and that the only visible change would be the addition of a wheelchair ramp on the east side of the building. Ms. Bernert reviewed the interior changes of the church structure which would retain all the historic woodwork and balcony area. Most of the pews will remain for use as theatre seating and that one of two rear stairways to the balcony will be occupied by a new chairlift.

The Education Center will have interior wall modifications to accommodate its use by the congregation. Ms. Bernert briefly described the Use Agreement and the Building Committee which were developed to facilitate the shared use of the building between the theatre and the congregation. She indicated the desire to be under construction by the fall and noted that she and the architect will be meeting in mid February with the staff of MHC to review the plan and the tax credit application.

The commission members expressed best wishes and overall support to Ms. Bernert and Mr. Gil Cardona-Erazo on this project.

Election of 2016 Historical Commission Officers

The Vice Chair entertained nominations for Officers from the floor.

Nomination of D. Henry for the Chair position and B. King for the Vice Chair position. Moved by C. Pacheco and seconded by J. Clarke

Nomination passed unanimously on a voice vote.

State Tax Credit Support Letters

A. Louro briefly explained that the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program consists of three yearly application rounds and applicants to this highly competitive funding source must seek the support of the local historical commission. She updated members on three tax credit letters which were sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission on behalf of the NBHC in support of Manomet Mills, 139-141 Union Street and the First Baptist Church projects. She also noted that a letter was sent to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in support of a grant which WHALE was seeking to potentially fund a Preservation Conference to be held in New Bedford in the spring.

Demolition-ES Riverside Avenue

A. Louro informed members that in her authority to act as an agent of the NBHC, she had classified the property located at ES Riverside Avenue as "non-historic", allowing its demolition without review at a

public hearing of the NBHC. She explained that the subject property was a portion of a boiler house located in the center of a parking lot between two mills within the Whitman Mills National Register District, and that it was unsafe, had experience deferred maintenance, and had no historic or architectural significance.

40C District Expansion

C. Pacheco sought information regarding the potential expansion of local historic districts within New Bedford. A. Louro responded that she had recently spoken to Chris Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs at Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding his reviewing the proposed districts and that his review could potentially be paired with a commission workshop. C. Pacheco spoke favorably regarding a workshop Mr. Skelly presented in Falmouth and M. Kish indicated that Mr. Skelly had been helpful to her as it related to the communities within the newly formed Blackstone Valley National Historical Park seeking to form 40C Districts. M. Kish indicated that she would like to have members of the Blackstone Valley commissions visit the NBHC to receive guidance and feedback.

Communications:

A. Louro explained that projects which receive federal funding must consider the effects the project might have on historic properties and allow the local historical commission the opportunity to comment on the project. This is often referred to as "Section 106 Review", after Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. She stated that the Verdean Gardens housing complex, which consists of eight buildings, including the former Donaghy School, has plans for interior and exterior rehabilitation and that they were seeking Section 106 Review; however she explained that she had just received the full architectural plans and that she would update members regarding the project at the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: The next regular commission meeting was scheduled for March 7, 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 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro

Secretary to the Historical Commission

Approved: 05.02.16