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**CITY OF STAMFORD**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD  
STAMFORD, CT 06904-2152

**(FINAL) Minutes of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC)**

Date: Regular Meeting held: February 5, 2019  
Location: Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd., Stamford CT 06904  
6th Floor Safety Training Room  
Present: Lynn Drobbin, Anne Goslin, David Woods, Barry Hersh, Rebecca Shannonhouse,  
Elena Kalman

**REGULAR MEETING**

**I. Call to order**

Meeting called to order 7:18 p.m. (Delay due to closure of Washington Blvd.)

A motion was made to have R. Shannonhouse and E. Kalman assigned as voting members for this meeting to make a quorum.

(The motion was moved by A. Goslin and seconded by B. Hersh and carried unanimously)

**II. Approval of Minutes**

There is a correction to the January meeting notes as requested by the president of the Hubbard Heights Association ("HHA"). All generally agreed to place the following note in the "Final" January 8, 2019 meeting minutes:

*"During the meeting I stated that in 2009 the HHA neighborhood saved these four (4) homes from demolition and at the time the hospital and COC agreed to preserve the single-family zoning and exclude it from the zoning change needed for the Vidal Court development. I thought I also mentioned that Mike DeMilt wrote Tom Bellele a letter in April of 2017 stating our opposition to a zone downgrade and he bought the properties with that knowledge. Also our district representatives are in favor of preserving single-family zoning".*

*"I don't believe that I ever said the agreement between HHA, the Hospital and COC was abandoned, rather it is being ignored."*

*Vicki Zacharewicz, President, HHA*

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2019 meeting with this correction.

(The motion was moved by L. Drobbin and seconded by A. Goslin and carried unanimously).



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**III. New Business**

**A. Proposed Text Amendment to Section 7.3 - 160 Atlantic Street  
Preliminary Discussion of Façade Options**

Applicant: Shelly Michani, Owner

Participants: Rick Redniss of Redniss & Mead, John Leydon of John Leydon, Attorney at Law.

1. Rick first said the Text Amendment the Commission had reviewed via e-mail was approved last night at the Zoning Board meeting. He added this group does not need to talk about that at this meeting. D. Woods asked if "Item No. 9" (relating to Section 7.3 applications) was included in the final Text Change as was stated at the Zoning hearing. Rick said no it was not included. The Text Amendment only included items about building overhangs at adjacent public right-of-ways. Rick said they wrote a regulation to allow a few items beyond the building line. After writing the first draft they agreed they do not need to reference Section 7.3. They stuck to the other issues. The Planning Board also said they do not need a Subsection No. 9. And thus, no reference to Section 7.3. The Text Amendment is only about building items, such as balconies, that can be at a second floor and above, and can project only 18 inches. There was one other item related to the maximum area for a ballroom.
2. Rick also said Section 7.3 is under consideration, but has not been used (yet). They still need to make a final design submission. They may choose to use Section 7.3 when they make the final submission. They are not asking for that review at this time.
3. Rick further stated this review of design is preliminary only. There are no decisions requested of HPAC. Rick reviewed the site plan and the mall parking, but is not prepared to discuss the new development parking at this time. The site sits next to the Town Center ramp. The historic property is owned by the First County Bank. There are some existing property encroachments that will be resolved by the owners.
4. The park plan calls for dressing up the front of the bank building. Lynn asked who is drawing the park plans? Rick said there is a Veteran's 501-C3 Association. Lynn said the park should be reviewed by HPAC. Rick said he is happy to share the plans for the park. The Association gave the City the money to manage the construction. Lynn said the park may be in the Downtown Historic District. They need to check. Renee noted she will review the maps.
5. Barry said they would like to hear about the historic building. Rick said they went through many design iterations. They had a design which had more parking, etc. They kept moving the building back and up. The number "5" is a big theme for the park and the building façade concepts. The first concept of the design was in the newspaper. They have another concept with brick design that is more sympathetic to the historic building. He said all persons they have asked have leaned toward the more sympathetic brick design.
6. Elena asked how the arches on the building relate to the park "5" design? Rick said they are talking to experienced historic architects and have not made a selection. The number "5" concept needs to be developed. They want to look at how the brick abuts the existing building. They need to make the building function with the bank building. They do not want to change the interior of the bank. They want to use it for the hotel lobby. They do want to activate the park.



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7. Lynn said HPAC would like to visit the site and go inside the bank building. Barry said the interiors may not be landmarked. Rick said there is an Annex in the back. Lynn would also like to review the nomination forms to see if the Annex is a part of the National Register nomination. She said if it is historic, it may need to remain. Rick said they only have a rough massing model and concept for discussion at this time. Those details will be worked out. Lynn added they are all happy for adaptive reuse of the bank building. Rick said they needed to push the height of the hotel building in order to get the room count that will make the project viable. There will need to be a little overhang above the existing roof at the back so there is circulation for the tower. Barry asked if the mall looms behind the bank. All generally agreed.
8. David asked if the development can consider the importance the sun shadows on the park. Rick said they will be doing that. They intend to start a sun study soon. They do want to provide shading in the park and have looked at alternatives. Lynn said the neighborhood has shorter buildings. The highest building is 7 stories on Atlantic Street. The Landmark building is not in the District. She added the proposal is out of scale with the Historic District. Rick noted there is an indication the zone will support a 15 story building. Lynn also has a concern that the addition of taller buildings will not address the Historic District any more. Rick said the Landmark building is just a block away. There is the mall and other modern buildings (urban renewal area) that are adjacent. The context is a mix of building types. Some have a more modern appearance. Renee Kahn added that when a person is down at the ground level in the park or on Atlantic Street, the bank building will be very visible in the foreground. She thinks the tower will blend together with the historic building. Rick also noted they will be asking for less than 1 point of FAR, as a bonus under Section 7.3. He said they can be allowed 1.5 FAR under the regulations. The post office is a bigger project (larger FAR request), under the Section 7.3.

**Resolution:**

All agreed the presentation at this meeting was general in nature and very preliminary. HPAC is not asked to provide a resolution. A formal submittal of the design will come later. Lynn said she would like to make a few recommendations. First, that HPAC be able to take a site tour. Second, she asked if HPAC can review how the mezzanine will look on the interior. And third, she wants to review the exterior walls, near the Annex. All generally agreed and arranged to have the walk-through this Saturday, February 9, 2019; date will be confirmed. (After the meeting the tour date was postponed until the property is under contract.)

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going)

**B. Section 7.3 of the Zoning Code - Revisions by Land use Bureau**

Applicant: City of Stamford

Participants: Vineeta Mathur, Associate Planner - Zoning Board, Land Use Bureau

1. Vineeta introduced and handed out a first DRAFT of Section 7.3 regulations for review. She said the Land Use Bureau has proposed some changes to the Section 7.3. The intent of the change is to increase the scope to include broader preservation purposes. It includes historic preservation overlay districts. It formally includes HPAC in the review process. It strengthens the bonuses allowed. There is some language about neighborhoods. They updated the definitions to reflect the new modern meanings of many terms.



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2. Vineeta said she can go portion-by-portion. After that feedback they will post the revised text online and then have a review period before filing the changes for approval. The changes have not been filed as of yet. She said this needs to be legible for all, so it applies to all properties, (meaning various sizes of properties).
3. Barry said it is good to see this proposal from the professional Land Use staff. Barry said it is important the other Land Use Boards review this as well. Vineeta said she wants to have a good comprehensive list of the historical and cultural resources. They hope to get an intern to help with the listings. Lynn said the listings need to be updated. All generally agreed a comprehensive listing of the resources will be important for owners and developers.
4. Anne asked about the “qualified person” and if the applicant pays for that person? Renee said the City pays for that. Renee said the City has budgeted \$3,000.00 per structure for Section 7.3 reviews during construction. She suggested that should continue. David said there may be some sharing of that expense with the owner when they file for a building permit. The amount should not be onerous. Vineeta noted Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief, wants to get a historic preservation trust fund that might finance the expert or qualified person. They are looking at the options.
5. David said he reviewed the “relief section” of the standards and they look fairly consistent with the existing standards. David also asked about the projects under 10,000 sq. ft. that will be “staff reviewed” rather than go before a Land Use Boards. Vineeta said they are trying to streamline the process a bit. A Special Exception permit will still be required to go to the Zoning Board. Any requests for bonuses will automatically go to the Land Use Boards, as a Special Exception. (Same process as currently in effect.)
6. David also asked that the language in the demolition section reference the demolition ordinance. Some of the timing for filing a delay, etc. should be coordinated with that document.
7. Lynn said it is important the language be very simple for the mom and pop type, small scale development projects. Renee agreed. Rebecca agreed. She said the process for review should be simplified and put into a brochure or outline. They might also set guidelines for routine repairs and cyclical maintenance that will not need to go through a Land Use process. All generally agreed.
8. The City might propose a threshold for those minor improvements. Vineeta said there may be two thresholds for contributing and non-contributing structures. Vineeta said this new section probably goes beyond just Section 7.3. There may also be “as-of-right” improvements in a Historic District, etc. that do not need Land Use approvals. She added that HPAC should still be called upon to make these more informal reviews and where bonuses are not requested. It was agreed the building permit is also the trigger for improvements. Vineeta will look at the language for minor alterations. But Section 7.3 may not be the right place to have written standards. All agreed a simple pamphlet should be put into the process that can help show a smaller owner the process is easy.
9. Lynn asked for public comments. Peter Quigley said that Section 7.3 should be careful with a concept for the “Transfer of Development Rights” (TDR). This can be difficult to manage. Elena added that a landowner who has a current property but cannot expand may feel as if there are no options. A TDR option may give some of those owners an opportunity. Peter also asked if Section 7.3 is able to address what can be rebuilt where there is an empty lot, or a previously demolished site, within a Historic District. Lynn said in those cases the project will likely fall under a “new” building standard which will need to follow the underlying Zone standards. Vineeta agreed to look at this further.



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10. Lynn said a “Historic Preservation Overlay District” should also cover new development within a Historic District. Vineeta said she can look at that. Mapping of the Overlay Districts will be important. Lynn said the Master Plan lacks the identification of Historic Overlay Districts. All agreed there should be a better understanding of how an Overlay District will work and if there are design standards that will need to be managed for those. Vineeta agreed some work needs to be done to evaluate the Overlay District options.
11. Lynn asked if Section 7.3 should be sent to the State? All generally agreed. Wes Haynes said it will be good to send a draft to Brad Schide and Greg Farmer for review. They are the circuit writers. It can also be sent to Mary Dunn at SHPO. Lynn will review that. Anne offered to follow up.

**Resolution:**

All agreed HPAC does not need to provide approvals at this point. The presentation by Vineeta was informational and intended to seek suggestions. All agreed HPAC can provide individual comments to Vineeta and there should be a deadline. She said one week to get comments back will be OK. Date was set for February 12, 2019 - using the comments in Word - track changes. A. Goslin agreed to send the draft copy of Section 7.3 suggestions to CT Preservation Trust for comment.

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going)

**C. Tax Rebate Discussion**

Participants: Rebecca Shannonhouse

1. Rebecca said she has done some more research of tax credits. The one handed out is from Atlanta and is fairly strait forward. The Commission should read it after the meeting. Barry said there is a Tax Increment Financing District in the South End. Taxes are frozen during the period of development and the tax money is used for improvements. This was created by a separate act. Barry also said there is some interest in opportunity zones that can support development and investment.
2. Rebecca’s observation is that an interim step will be helpful to identify the existing Historic Districts. It was noted Vineeta has placed the Historic Districts on the City’s GIS. All generally agreed a pamphlet will be helpful for the public. The group suggested that Rebecca try to take the idea to the City for further consideration and discussion. She agreed to first take the options to Ralph and Vineeta for further review.

**Resolution:**

There was no resolution presented. All agreed to read the information provided by Rebecca. Rebecca has agreed to set up and meet with Ralph and Vineeta to discuss the opportunities. David and Elena volunteered to go to the meeting as well.

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going)



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**D. Summer intern**

Participants: Lynn Drobbin

There was a general discussion about the options for getting an intern to assist with mapping surveys and support of HPAC. Lynn said the group needs to put a job description together first and present that to Ralph and Vineeta. She noted there is the potential for some modest funding for an intern this coming summer. Wes Haynes added there may be some small funds available through the State Historic Preservation Office. Lynn said HPAC should stay focused with the City's support of an intern at this time as that may take place for this coming summer. It may take too long for State applications. Some of tasks were discussed as follows.

Phase One:

- a. An inventory of existing and potential structures or cultural artifacts with an update to the map of areas that have been surveyed. It was noted that a lot of the west side has been surveyed.
- b. Develop a brochure with a clear map of the Historic Districts and sites, readily available.
- c. A map of historic properties annotated. State and National properties identified with an auto windshield survey. That includes verifying the structures are still there.

Phase Two:

- a. Overlay Districts identified on a map for further consideration.

All generally agreed to review tasks and discuss this further at the next meeting.

**Resolution:**

It was generally agreed Anne will draft a job description for review at the next meeting. Wes also agreed to assist with the task list. He will also talk to the State Historic Preservation Office to see if the deadlines for applications can be achieved.

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going)

**IV. Old Business**

There was no old business for discussion

**V. Adjournment**

Lynn Drobbin adjourned the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Drafted by: David W. Woods, Secretary - HPAC: February 20, 2019

Meetings are normally on the first Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 p.m. in the 6th Floor Safety Training Room. The next meeting is planned for March 5, 2019.