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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: November 12, 2019

Location: Government Center
6th Floor Safety Training Room
888 Washington Blvd.
Stamford CT 06901

Present: Anne Goslin, David Woods, Barry Hersh, Rebecca Shannonhouse, Elena Kalman

REGULAR MEETING

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order 7:07 p.m.

A motion was made to assign Rebecca Shannonhouse and Elena Kalman to be voting members for this meeting. Anne Goslin (Vice-Chair) will chair the current meeting.

(The motion was moved by B. Hersh and seconded by D. Woods, and carried unanimously.)

II. Approval of October 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2019 meeting. There were no changes to the minutes noted.

(The motion was moved by B. Hersh and seconded by R. Shannonhouse and carried unanimously)

III. New Business

A. Main St. Bridge (Mill River)

Applicant: City of Stamford Engineering Department: Lou Casolo, Engineering; John Wengell, WMC Engineers

Participants: A. Goslin asked to have Lou Casolo bring us up to speed on the Main Street Bridge project. John Wengell of WMC, Project Designer, is also in attendance.

Presented: L. Casolo has prepared an overview of the time line.

1. Lou said this was presented in August 2018. After the hearing there was an update in September 2018. The MOU was prepared for Mill River. The previous Connecticut DOT proposal was extensive. Mill River obtained a DEEP grant that will support rehabilitation in kind. Their intent is to maintain all that we see. The outer walks are to be removed as they were added at one point. That will reduce the loads on the piers. The scope became smaller. There was an update to the Board of Representatives this past summer. WMC was hired and final documents were prepared. The bid opening for the construction is this week.



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2. Lou updated the progress. Contractors have had walk throughs. There were 2 addendums. There was interest from 6 general contractors. It is now a rehabilitation project. From a historic preservation view, it will be restored. It will be used by pedestrians only. It can take an emergency vehicle.
3. D. Woods asked about how the emergency vehicles will access the bridge. Lou said there will be a removable bollard. A driver of an emergency vehicle will need to get out of the vehicle and remove the bollard. David asked if that will be difficult. Lou said he is only doing what he has been told. David asked if it is easier to go around the bridge on Tresser or Broad Street. There was no conclusion.
4. J. Wengell gave an overview. He said it is a lenticular truss bridge. Portions of western abutment have failed and the center pier has partially failed. They will repair the substructure. There will be a new concrete wall on the eastern side. The center pier will be new, all in concrete. They will remove outside walkways. There will be a 10.5 ft. travel way with planters on the sides. The steel that is in good shape will be sandblasted and painted. Historically it was red. They expect it will be red in the future.
5. Most of the truss is in good shape. The landscape architect designed a railing for the middle section near the planters. They want to use a similar design in the park. They want fall protection at the area of the planters. The railing is not a part of this project. It is a part of the Mill River budget. A few expressed interest that HPAC should see the railing. Lou will send it. The Commission wants to make it as historically correct as possible. The trusses will not be removed and will be sandblasted in place. The middle pier will be all new concrete. Stone is at the ends of the embankment structure and will be restored.
6. David expressed interest in making the center structure concrete as historical as possible. John said they can do form liners. Lou said that is expensive. David requested they sandblast or reveal the aggregate of the concrete so it looks more historical. Lou agreed to look into it.
7. John noted there will be lighting that will up-light the trusses. He also said there will be some walkway lighting in the planters.
8. There was some discussion about the road bed construction. John said the existing road bed will be removed and concrete will be put down as the traffic surface. The original was brick. Anne asked if the concrete can be stamped so that it looks like brick. Lou said he will review that option.
9. Lou noted he has a Coastal Site Plan Review. That is the next step before construction starts. They referred the Engineering Bureau to HPAC for review.

Motion: Anne asked the group to form a motion. All generally support the preservation of the bridge and the proposed use of in-kind materials on the structure below the bridge deck. There were three items discussed: **(A)** It would like to see details of the center pier design. There was a request for stone veneer. There was also a request the concrete be sandblasted to reveal aggregate as a less costly option to stone veneer. The City should return with a proposal; **(B)** The Commission wants to further review details of the railings; and **(C)** The Commission requested a paint test be completed. The group generally favors the “original red color,” but would like to see that color chip before it is completed. .

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



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B. Study for South End Local Historic District

Applicant: South End, Ad Hoc Committee, Carmine Tomas

Participants: A. Goslin introduced the next agenda item. She said members, property owners and residents, of the South End have been advocating for the neighborhood's preservation and are looking for support for a neighborhood study that may result in the recommendation of forming a Local Historic District. Anne said she was invited to the last Land Use Committee meeting a week ago to share HPAC's comments on the potential study. The Land Use Committee held the topic and she did not speak at the meeting.

Anne further noted the members had not presented their plan formally to HPAC; Anne had polled HPAC members prior to attending the meeting. All generally agreed HPAC should support a study to explore the South End. There is no proposed district yet. Anne pointed out there was a South End study that was completed a little over a year ago. There is also a current National Register Historic District in effect. The study recommended a preservation effort be concentrated in the area of Atlantic to Pacific and Henry to Dock Streets.

1. Presented: Carmine Tomas presented the issues. He is a business owner in the South End. The City Master Plan acknowledges the need for historic preservation. There was a person from SHPO office that supports efforts to start a study committee. They want to find what Historic resources are left and what can be saved. There are many letters of support in the community including Mary Dunne and Renee Kahn.
2. They hope, out of tonight's meeting, they can get HPAC support. The study will be executed by volunteers. Anne asked if the group will be guided by a professional architectural historian. Carmine noted there is a non-matching state grant that will be of no cost to the City. They want to hire someone to help do a plan and a survey. Anne asked if they are going for a local historic district. Carmine said they do not know yet. They need to do Step #1. Anne will ask if they will study the existing historic district. Carmine said yes. He repeated they are just trying to do Step #1, and understands it is a long step.
3. HPAC asked if Ralph Blessing could offer some perspective on this study request. Ralph provided context for the Land Use Bureau. They did a neighborhood study funded by DOT and SHPO. He has a concern that with a new study committee, time and resources will be lost. He further noted another local historic district may take away powers from HPAC. They are committed to working on some of the areas that were identified as preservation potential in the latest report. The Land Use Bureau is working on developing a trust fund. They want to move preservation forward for the entire community.
4. He further stated the Land Use Bureau wants to be sure we have a comprehensive approach. He has some concern if SHPO can make funds available, as they just did a study. Ralph has not asked SHPO. It was clarified that SHPO contributed \$50K to the \$100K from DOT for the last study.
5. Carmine said SHPO has said there will be funds available. There was a question from Elizabeth McCauley of South End Ad Hoc who said there is contradictory part of a study where high rise towers are involved. She said the zoning omnibus changes may not be as strong as the historic district can be. The final step for any plan or district that develops will need to get an approval from the City. They see themselves starting with a small group of buildings. They do not want to go out to do the survey until they have formal permission to do so.



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6. E. Kalman noted that many plans provide for a buffer zone where there is a historic district and an area of pressure to develop. She asked about a buffer zone between a historic section and the high rise proposals that have significantly greater density. Ralph said he is working on a zoning regulation that will require a step down in scale toward historic neighborhoods. He does not know if that change will be sharp enough. Ralph also said he hopes a historic trust fund can be more effective in generating money for improvements that can occur sooner and more effectively, for a group that will struggle for resources. He asked: "What can the City do that is helpful and can work quickly". They have asked for an intern to work in the Land Use /bureau. They know the South End is very sensitive. They must put their resources there. There are significant changes proposed for the historic Section 7.3 that will support restoration. They are willing to work cooperatively to identify the sensitive areas.
7. B. Hersh asked Carmine if they can clarify the purpose of the study. He said they support the Land Use Bureau. Elena said there are two different issues. **(a)** The importance of an inventory and **(b)** the proposal for another reviewing body separate from HPAC. Ralph noted if a separate local historic district goes ahead, there will be a "Preservation Commission" separate from HPAC. They will need to review how such a Commission will interact with HPAC. Ralph further said they are proposing strengthening the HPAC review in the Zoning Code changes. He wants to be sure historic preservation can work. He has a concern there is under investment and they need to find a way to help property owners. He thinks there should be one body to review historic properties and that should be HPAC.
8. Barry noted this could be the 5th study of the South End in 20 years. We (HPAC) would all like to see more done. He believes that this is a City of Stamford issue. The City needs to support and encourage. HPAC should support any and all preservation options. Barry further asked if they see a separate Commission? Carmine said they are first looking for some regulations that can protect the neighborhoods. Anne asked if they have reviewed the proposed changes to Section 7.3. There was no answer.
9. Anne asked for any public comments. Peter Quigley spoke. He said he is a new resident. They want to manage a plan for lower density. He said they have to be working to preserve the neighborhood. Annie said there is a historic district now and the City and Ralph are working for changes to the Zoning Code. She commented that everyone agrees about the need to preserve the district. Ralph said the City is working to implement the 2018 recommendations by making various changes in the Zoning Regulations and by proposing a trust fund.
10. John Zalinsky, representing the 11th District, thanked HPAC for their review.
11. Barry asked - is there a time schedule? Anne said she was asked to report to the Land Use Commission.
12. R. Shannonhouse asked to clarify what they will get out of a new study that they did not get from a prior study. Carmine said they want to be able to canvas the neighbors. Barry said there was considerable community engagement. There were a large number of citizens at last year's community meetings for the study. Carmine said they do not have a direction on what the neighbors want.



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13. Rebecca also asked if the group knows what level of development they will support. Carmine responded they do not know, and that could also be a purpose of this study. It is really just a survey of options for the neighbors.
14. There was some general questioning about “overlay districts” as contemplated. Ralph added that an overlay district will freeze development rights. It takes away the pressure to develop. Section 7.3 and the potential of a trust fund loan can give incentives.
15. Sean Boger said BLT does have an opinion and BLT has provided great pressure. He said that Mr. Blessing is not helping what this group wants. That is to get this study done, leading to a local historic district. They want to ask the neighbors if they want a historic district.
16. Rachel Cain of BLT said she has looked into the statutes (CGS 147 B). It has a section on how local historic districts work. The statutes require a poll of the property owners. There needs to be 66% of the owners voting in favor. She will forward the statute to HPAC. They (BLT) want to understand how these various Commissions will work and how that additional layer will work.
17. Kieran Ryan said they are just requesting support for funding of a study to review the remaining historic resources, and complete a poll of property owners. Once the study is completed then property owners will still need to vote, and then it will need to go to the Board of Representatives. They are just trying to give neighbors a voice. “What is the big deal” - he asked? They are just asking for support for a first step.

Motion: The formation of a motion was discussed. It was generally agreed the next meeting of the Planning Board is to be on January 2, 2020. HPAC has time to review this before presenting. All generally agreed to **Table** the discussion without resolution. The discussion can also be taken up again at the December meeting.

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

C. Widening of Pulaski Street

Participants: Ralph Blessing, Land Use bureau

1. Presented: Anne introduced the discussion about potential acquisition by negotiation or eminent domain of Pulaski Street properties over to Washington Boulevard. No formal application was submitted to HPAC but Anne introduced the current discussion within the City. The properties under discussion are 24 Pulaski Street (full acquisition), and 4 Pulaski Street and 256 & 274 Washington Boulevard (partial acquisition) for a road widening project. All properties are contributing properties within the South End National Register Historic District.
2. Ralph said this project has been on-going for many years and started before BLT and Charter Communications developed the plans for the towers. The road widening project relates to the road widening on the other side of the train station for the “Urban Transitway.”
3. Elena expressed concern that if the properties are taken on Pulaski Street, that the Charter Communications parking garage will expand making an unfriendly neighbor to the Pulaski Street property owners and residents on the south side of the street.



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4. All generally agreed the City should make a requirement to have a landscaped or planted buffer zone on the north side of Pulaski Street to ease the transition to the historic properties on the south side of the street. Ralph said he will look into the options. There was also some concern about the loading dock that is accessed along Pulaski Street. That should be screened as well. Ralph noted the tower structures are placed on the opposite side of the site toward the highway and will not affect the sunlight along Pulaski Street.
5. Ralph also stated if the City takes 24 Pulaski Street by eminent domain then it cannot sell the property, after the road widening, back to BLT. The City will own it. That indicates there will be some limits of how close the parking garage can come to Pulaski Street. He also noted the corner lot at Washington Boulevard has already been purchased by BLT and the group should push for some sort of landscape buffer at that site. Ralph will also support the landscape buffers.

Motion: It was generally understood that a motion will not be made because there is no formal request of HPAC for a review of this by the City

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

IV. Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

V. Adjournment

A. Goslin adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m. (There was no further discussion)

Drafted by David W. Woods AIA, Secretary
Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
November 18, 2019

Meetings are normally on the first Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 pm in the 6th Floor Safety Training Room. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2019.