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**CITY OF STAMFORD**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
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**(FINAL) Minutes of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC)**

Date: Regular Meeting held: December 1, 2015  
Location: Stamford City Hall, 888 Washington Blvd. Stamford CT 06901  
6th Floor Safety Training Room  
Present: Attending: Lynn Drobbin, Anne Goslin, David Woods, Barry Hersh, Jill Smyth, and alternates: Elena Kalman, Lynn Villency Cohen  
Missing: Rebecca Shannonhouse

**REGULAR MEETING**

**I. Call to Order** (Meeting was called to order 7:04 p.m.)

**II. Meeting minutes**

There were two corrections submitted by A. Goslin.

1. An item under old business, A.4, it was noted that Dave Killeen will share projects that come before the Zoning Board, the ZBA and the Planning Board.
2. Under Section F, Grants update. A. Goslin reported about the Glenbrook neighborhood (not the Cove neighborhood).

A motion was made to approve the minutes with the changes noted.

(The motion was moved by J. Smyth and seconded by B. Hersh and carried unanimously.)

**III. New Business**

**A. Hoyt Barnum House**

1. The project was introduced by Lou Casolo. The design team is returning to HPAC in order to present the first part of the Historic Structures Report that was submitted to SHPO.. The team is seeking an approval from HPAC of the proposed move plan to enable HPAC to sign the letter of recommendation to the State Review Board that the project should remain on the National Register of Historic Places after the move. The State Review Board will be a December 7th SHPO meeting (does this make sense?). The SHPO requires that HPAC – as the agent of the Certified Local Government-sign the state's form for endorsement before that meeting. The Mayor's office has already submitted that form. Lou noted that Jeff Pardo was in attendance with CWA, and Pam Coleman of SHS. Lou noted that the projects and reports to the state have been on schedule.



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2. Lou introduced CWA - Joe Chadwick to present. There are two important aspects of the project to review: the siting of the building at the new location and the move itself.

The reason for the move has been established. The proposed site has very few archeological resources, or prehistoric evidence. The building is a Dutch style house similar to others in New York / New Jersey areas. It has an unusual roof shape that is not symmetrical.

CWA went through four iterations for the new location of the house. He noted that there are constraints due to the grade. Option 1 faces the historic school building, now SHS headquarters. Option 2 faces north with a similar solar exposure. Option 3 uses a corner orientation to the site, angled to High Ridge Road. Option 4 has a site plan that faces High Ridge and similar solar orientation. Grading can be adjusted to match the original. CWA noted that the landscape plan is preliminary at this time. After the state submittal and approvals the plan will be more fully developed.

CWA further noted that the actual relocation is challenging. The disassembly will involve 5 pieces: 1 is the saddlebag extension on the side; 2 is the roof; 3. is the chimney; 4 is the body of the house; and 5 is the foundation that will be separated. They have studied the route as shown in the report and believe that the parts will fit below the Merritt Parkway. CWA showed renderings of the High Ridge Road site and explained how it replicates the existing site.

B. Hersh asked about the 5 pieces. Why is the wall on the left side of the house taller and why is it kept in place for the move? CWA noted the wall is that height now. There is indication that the wall will fit under the parkway. Barry asked how long would it take to complete the move. CWA said it is believed it will be three days. They will identify parking locations along the way, and will do the move at night. L. Casolo said that the city has reviewed the issues with road closures, the route, and utilities, and are satisfied that it can work. The city also believes that the information CWA has prepared is comprehensive.

D. Woods asked if the chimney would be moved intact. CWA said yes, but they may make a new fire chamber and then cover it with the original stone. That is to be determined later. CWA said the same is true with the foundation. The stones of the foundation may need to be moved separately. There may be a need to build a new foundation at the site before the move and then infill with the stones later to replicate the look of the original. E. Kalman asked if there are significant landscape features that should also be relocated. CWA said all the bluestone paving stones are documented and will be moved. Site features will also be transported to the new site.

L. Casolo added that they will have more site information as the project progresses and construction documentation are completed over the winter. L. Drobbin said that submittals will be a two-step process. HPAC will revisit any open items at a later date. Lynn also asked about a fire suppression system. Is it important to secure this historic landmark? She also asked about heating the building. Will the weather have an effect on interior materials? CWA is considering a sprinkler system. It is too early in the process to determine the cost and need. P. Coleman



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added that they tried to heat the house before, but there is no insulation. They normally shut down in December and reopen in April with limited heat needs.

E. Kalman said that the ADA-compliant sidewalk makes too modern a statement. CWA noted the path is necessary because of the 6 foot grade change. It was suggested that the walkway be screened with plantings. CWA agreed and will be developing the landscape plan later in the process.

The wording for a motion was discussed. L. Casolo is seeking approval of the HSR report. In regards to the retention of the National Register listing status, there is a three-tier process with the National Park Service having to sign off after State Review Board approval.

Lynn mentioned that SHPO had a question about keeping the original stones at the foundation. HPAC requested that CWA send a statement about the suggested foundation system to SHPO. The CT Trust voiced concern that the building will not have the same south facing orientation as the original. It was understood by all that the new site is on the opposite side of the street and does not work well to match the existing southern orientation. It was requested that CWA also send a statement about the orientation and the reason for the selected orientation siting, the analysis of the 4 options, and the justification for the selection of option 4.

B. Hersh made a motion that HPAC should provide a letter of support and have Lynn Drobbin sign the SHPO form of approval, approving the Historic Structures Report (HSR) as submitted and also recommending that the building be relisted on the National Register of Historic Places after the move. HPAC further requests that the city and CWA return to HPAC when there is more detail with the new site plans, and construction documentation is near completion.

(The motion was moved by B. Hersh and seconded by J. Smyth and approved unanimously.)

**B. Sacred Heart Academy, Strawberry Hill**

The project was introduced by L. Casolo. The city submitted the HABS report, which ties back to the HPAC request a year time ago. Perkins Eastman prepared the HABS documentation. Joe Costa and Joe Banks developed the document. The design team is returning to HPAC to provide an update and to submit the HABS document for review and approval.

J. Banks noted that the report was developed with a consultant Rick Weis in New Haven. Joe also presented the photographs from the submitted report. He noted the NW (northwest) house is in decent shape. The SW (southwest) house is not in good shape and is currently boarded up.

L. Drobbin asked if they researched the houses at SHS. They said they did not. She also said that HPAC is particularly concerned that these buildings be properly documented because there are very few historic cottages left in Stamford as their small size often restricts the opportunities for reuse.



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HPAC's 12/11/14? decision requested that the city record, in accordance with HABS standards, both of the cottages prior to demolition. Lynn described the documentation guidelines from the National Park Service showing the requirements for a short form submission. All agreed that a short form is acceptable as long as the buildings are documented properly.

Lynn noted that the project does not fall under Section 106 therefore the NPS or the SHPO are not involved. HPAC may be able to submit to SHPO to get a HABS number. Copies of the final report should go to various places in the city and state where it will be available to people for research purposes, such as: Ferguson Library, SHS, UCONN at Storrs and the SHPO.

HNP provided a letter of review of the report indicating that the HABS was not up to standards and should not be accepted by HPAC. HNP commented that sketches should be made of the floor plans. Lynn also noted that the submitted HABS documentation does not reach the level of standard HABS submittals, even short forms. All maps must be noted with north arrows and all photos should indicate direction. Locator maps should also be provided. Contextual photos of the buildings should be provided to show their placement on the property in relation to the other existing structures.

HPAC is not satisfied with the level of the HABS documentation. The design team should feel free to utilize researchers that are familiar with the preparation of HABS documents and that can provide more detailed information.

L. Drobbin requested that the design team conduct the required research and graphics and resubmit the report and return to HPAC. It was suggested that HPAC could review the resubmission via email before the next meeting in order to conform to the city's demolition schedule. HPAC requested that the design team conduct research and write more information about the history and significance of the buildings and must list sources of information. Renee recommends that a local historian – such as Nils Kerschus - a board member of HNPP, be engaged to conduct the research and prepare the report as he is well-versed in the history of Stamford and is familiar with the local archives.

L. Casolo asked that HPAC include in the motion an approval for the city to move ahead with getting bids for demolition. They anticipate demolition in January. HPAC generally agreed that they would not approve demolition before the report is resubmitted and approved by the group.

(A motion was moved, to include the language as noted above, by J. Smyth, seconded by D. Woods, and carried unanimously.)

After the motion, L Casolo noted that they did advertise the building for sale. Three persons expressed interest. No persons followed up. L. Casolo did reach out again. There has not been any further response. The buildings were advertised, as requested by HPAC, for 3 months. That time has expired. There are remediation issues with asbestos etc. The city is prepared to do the remediation. They will want to move ahead with demolition around January or February of next year. He also noted that tree removal is a part of the general construction documentation



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set that will go out to bids. The trees have been posted. Jill Smyth noted that there were several trees noted on the December 6 walking tour that she had asked to be removed from the demolition list; Lou said this has not been done. Lou will get back to Jill on this issue.

(There was no further discussion.)

**C. 148 Myrtle Ave.**

Lisa Feinberg introduced this 7.3 density bonus application. Ravi Ahuja, the architect, the owners, and Renee Kahn were also in attendance to support the project. The site is on the east side of Myrtle Ave. near Colony Pizza, in the South End Historic District. The original Queen Anne style house is similar to other multi-family houses that were formerly comprised this neighborhood. The project will convert the existing building into two units and add three townhouse units in the back with auto access via an easement on the adjacent property to the west. The original Queen Anne style of the house will be restored as much as possible as a part of the 7.3 requirements.

When asked by HPAC, Renee stated that she did not approve of the gray coloration of the façade, and that she would conduct additional research and choose a color scheme later. Renee will be on site to approve the work.

The Planning Board requested the addition of fish scale shingles on the upper story. That has been included in the submission. R. Kahn further said that when they will uncover the existing materials and there will be changes. The intent is to replace what is there with her direction.

The group indicated that they were not happy with the addition at the back and the proportions in relation to the original. Renee agreed. E. Kalman asked if there can be some more detail or scaled set backs etc. that can be added to the addition. Ravi indicated that they are constrained by the size of the proposed units by the developer. The group agreed that the addition is not readily visible from public right-of-ways and therefore should not pose an issue.

A motion was made to support the project with the understanding the R. Kahn will review the work on site during construction. A letter of approval should be sent to the land use boards as soon as possible.

(Motion was moved by D. Woods and seconded by A. Goslin, and carried unanimously.)

**D. Mill River Park Expansion**

B. Hennessey introduced the RBS site project. He stated there are a series of applications moving through the city. RBS acquired many lots west of their building many years ago as their site was being developed. There was no plan at that time for the use of those lots. They still own



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the land. There is the old Domus house on Clinton Avenue. and two other housing buildings on Division Street that remain. RBS funded the Domus relocation and the three houses have been mostly vacant since that time.

The city and RBS did not do much with the project through the recession. The city now wants to do the next phase of the Mill River restoration and there is an opportunity for RBS to grant an easement along the river for the city and public use. There is federal money for construction and flood mitigation but need to spend the money by June 2017 and also need to acquire more easements, which will be facilitated by trades of city owned properties.

D. Woods attended the pre-application conference with the city and noted two concerns 1. the demolition of the Domus building, and 2. Concern for the scale of development along the river easement. Bill said that the apartment-massing model is being redesigned because of complaints from neighbors and therefore the scale will change. The issues of the development option may be outside of HPAC's normal jurisdiction.

R. Kahn noted that the Domus building was one of the top 100 buildings identified in 1979 in a survey of important city buildings. She asked if it could be moved. B. Hennessy said that he does not think so. D. Woods also asked if the site could be redesigned to allow the building to stay in place. He said that the site is important to the parking for the RBS tower and said the loss of units will not be acceptable to the owner. B. Hersh also said the Domus building is up against other larger buildings right now and the context is not great for it in the future. Bill said that this site is a good location for larger scale development in the downtown.

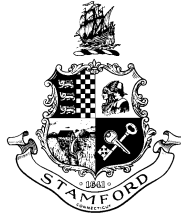
L. Drobbin noted a concern with demolition in areas with older architecture of character. Bill said the HPAC should take the opportunity to create a dialogue of the issues about saving valuable buildings. HPAC should be documenting important structures. If there is short list of valuable buildings, it should be put out there.

R. Kahn asked if the Midas site could be used to move the building. The discussion noted that HPAC can make a request that RBS and the city evaluate the Midas site. HPAC can also voice it's displeasure with a potential demolition of the Domus building. It was also noted that HPAC should not comment on the proposed development model. All understood that the next steps will include a request to demolish the structures and HPAC will have additional review of the project as it proceeds through land use boards. It was generally agreed that HPAC will forward comments to Normal Cole at this time, as requested at the pre-application meeting, and before December 4<sup>th</sup>.

(The item was tabled without further discussion. Review of status will be ongoing.)

**E. Ferguson Library Facade Improvements**

The project was introduced by A. Knapp of the Stamford Public Library. This project is returning to HPAC in order to show changes to the original plans and additional renovation work including more developed documentation. She noted that they now have SHPO approval for and that



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Kronenberger and Sons, a restoration specialist, has been selected to do the work on the building.

The corner column that was burned cannot be restored but will be replicated. They will use wood throughout the construction as SHPO was adamant about that. Plasterwork will be repaired in kind. Front entry steps will be repaired with marble to match the original. The entry doors will be new and replicate the former children's side door. They also would like to have Kronenberger repair the parapet wall along Bedford Street if the funds are available. There may be other projects down the road such as restoring the copper roof and the 1910 windows.

A new landscape plan for the front was prepared by Doyle Herman.

A motion was discussed to support the project so that the library can proceed with a building permit. The motion is that HPAC approves the restoration as presented with the rehabilitation and restoration of in-kind materials. A letter will be submitted to land use boards as soon as possible.

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

#### **IV. Old Business**

##### **A. Approval of 2016 meeting dates**

The group agreed to request two changes. First, the July 5<sup>th</sup> meeting date should be moved to the second Tuesday or to Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup>. Second, the November 1<sup>st</sup> date may occur on Election Day and should be moved to the second Tuesday or to Wednesday the 2<sup>nd</sup>. All the other dates looked good. L. Drobbin will talk to Deb in the land use office.

Postscript Note: As a follow up, November 1 is not Election Day so this date holds as an HPAC meeting date; the proposed July 5<sup>th</sup> date has been changed to July 12. All have agreed to the dates as proposed

##### **B. Programming ideas**

B. Hersh reported that the 375 committee may not have money, so there may not be any programs with HPAC. There is hope that there will be funds allocated by the mayor in the future. A meeting next week will be attended by J. Smyth, J. Norinsky, and B. Hersh.

A. Goslin suggested that the group prepare a pamphlet and reveal it at a 375-year anniversary event at the old post office. Jill Smyth suggested that the pamphlet be prepared in concert with HNP. The subject of the pamphlet has not been determined; possibly review of neighborhoods or buildings. Anne said that we might be able to project images at a post office event. All agreed to work together with HNP.



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E. Kalman has a meeting with the owner/developer next week and may give some dates to them for review.

(Review of status will be ongoing.)

**C. Status of Pending Demolitions**

J. Smyth gave an update of the status with pending demolition permits. There have not been any new ones in the last few weeks.

A. Goslin will review a recently-provided list of pending Land Use applications. .

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

**D. Old discussion item: West Main St. Bridge**

B. Hersh and J. Smyth attended the meeting on the Main St. Bridge. They reported that the bridge plans have been revised and documentation is near completion. They will save the original steel frame and will have pedestrian access as was noted previously.

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

**V. Adjournment**

L. Drobbin adjourned the meeting at 10:20 PM. (There was no further discussion.)

Drafted by David W. Woods, AIA, December 4, 2015  
Secretary, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission.