



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Robin Kelly
Denis (DJ) Chagnon (Alt.)
Adam Wiley (Alt.)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Community Room, 3rd Floor, Visiting Nurses Association, 259 Lowell Street
6:40 p.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2019

Members Present: Dick Bauer, Alan Bingham*, Caitlin Hart, Eric Parkes, Mark Sternman, Adam Wiley*.

Members Absent: Ryan Falvey, Anthony Griseto*, Robin Kelly, Denis (DJ) Chagnon*.

*Alternates

Staff Present: Kristi Chase, Sarah White.

Others Present: Sunayana Thomas (Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development).

I. Determinations of Preferably Preserved (STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

HPC 2019.045 – 5 Palmer Avenue	
Applicant:	City of Somerville
Property Owner:	City of Somerville
Application Date:	July 11, 2019
Significant:	July 16, 2019
Recommendation:	Not Preferably Preserved
Discussion:	Sunayana Thomas presented on behalf of the City of Somerville. Sunayana Thomas stated that the City acquired the property in 2013, with the intention of removing the structure and converting the site into open space for the adjacent school and the community. The exact nature of the open space (passive/active) is to be determined in forthcoming meetings with community members.



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	<p>Eric Parkes commented that the most favorable outcome would be for the structure to go away. None of its context is left.</p> <p>Dick Bauer noted that the city came in front of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to request funds to acquire this property for open space purposes, and that the CPC funded the acquisition. A land restriction will be put on the property.</p> <p>The Commission generally agreed that the building seems out of place, rather than contributing to the fabric of the neighborhood.</p>
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to find the property Not Preferably Preserved.

II. Other Business

HPC 2019.023 – 28 Clyde Street	
Applicant:	Richard Monagle, RJM Development LLC
Property Owner:	Ann C. Dicey for Leo F Reardon
Agent:	John Masciarelli
Application Date:	April 2, 2019
Significant:	May 21, 2019
Preferably Preserved:	June 18, 2019
Current Status:	Request to re-instate intent to demolish.
Discussion:	<p>The applicant had previously decided to withdraw intent to demolish, and the Commission had voted to approve this request. However, the applicant since decided that they no longer want to incorporate the existing structure in their future plans, and they requested to re-instate their intent to demolish.</p> <p>Sarah White clarified that this re-instatement does not start the nine-month rolling clock from the beginning; the period during which the applicant may work with Preservation staff until demolition is permitted will be nine months, less the time between determination of Preferably Preserved (beginning June 19, 2019) and approval of request to withdraw intent to demolish (July 16, 2019). 27 days of the demo delay period had already elapsed. 8 months and 3 days now remain on that demolition delay. The demo delay will now end on April 18, 2020.</p> <p>The Commission did not need to vote on Significant or Preferably Preserved again, because the Commission had already determined both for this property at earlier HPC meetings.</p>
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to re-instate Preferably Preserved status for 28 Clyde Street.

- HPC Guidelines

Guidelines were drafted by the Commission in 2013, but never finalized, approved, or implemented. Preservation staff would like the Commission to revisit these, with the idea that Guidelines provide guidance to the Commission as well as guidance to the public.

Commissioners will review the Guidelines independently and come prepared to discuss their edits and recommendations at the September 17 meeting. The goal is to have Guidelines voted into acceptance by the end of 2019. Sarah White noted that while the



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Commission should aim to have a complete set of Guidelines approved by the end of the year, that does not mean the Guidelines will be final or unchangeable. The Commission is empowered to change, edit, or add to the Guidelines at any time.

In redeveloping these Guidelines, Commissioners should keep in mind that there is no budget currently for illustrations to accompany the written Guidelines. The wording of the Guidelines are the rule. Language should be easily understandable, and the Guidelines should be clear and defensible as they are written.

- Demolition Review Fees

Using the Zoning Board's zoning relief case processes as an example. Application and other fees are required, and, in part, offset staff time and resources.

Staff is proposing Demolition Review fees to do the same—offset staff time and resources (though fees won't be directly allocated to any one task or staff position). Demolition review fees would underscore the value of research work being done for each case (estimated 10-15 hours per property). Demolition review fees would also allocate the cost (in part) to the person initiating and doing the work, rather than burdening citizens with the costs.

During the July 2019 meeting, the Commission gave Sarah White authority to explore other communities' demolition review fee practices, in order to present a report and a recommendation to the Commission in the future.

Ideas discussed included: no fees for Local Historic District (LHD) properties (with the idea that they already bear the burden of LHD restrictions/requirements); different fees for cases that simply require staff sign-off (for example: concrete block garages) and other cases (those that come before the Commission); different fees for minor work and major work.

- HPC Minutes

There were no minutes from the July 16, 2019 meeting to review; these will be available for review ahead of the September 17 meeting.

Reports and plans are available on the City of Somerville website at archive.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation-commission/hpc-cases-and-decisions and on the third floor of City Hall at 93 Highland Avenue. Cases may be continued to a later date(s); therefore, check the agenda on the website 48 hours in advance of the meeting or call (617) 625-6600 x2500 to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertized, but will be listed on the agenda. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the public hearing, by email to historic@somervillema.gov, by fax to (617) 625-0722, or by mail addressed to the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission.



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