



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 at 6:40 p.m.
Third Floor Conference Room
Somerville City Hall

Staff Present: Kristi Chase and Brandon Wilson (in and out).

Members Present: Kevin Allen, Dick Bauer, Alan Bingham*, Natasha Burger**, Tom DeYoung*, Eric Parkes, Kelly Speakman, and Todd Zinn*. Natasha Burger arrived at 7:00 PM and was not a voting member until 9:30 PM when Kelly Speakman left.

Members Absent: DJ Chagnon*, Sarah Degutis*, Ryan Falvey, Abby Freedman, Derick Snare*, and Brad Stearns*

*Alternates

** Non-voting Alternates.

Others present: Alan Carrier, Barbara Castro, Wendall Kalsow, William Schaefer, and Sylvia Shurcliff.

A moment of silence was held in memory of Fred Lund, late of the OSPCD and longtime City draftsman. He was instrumental in reminding the City of the importance of Prospect Hill and Somerville in the American Revolution. His artwork blessed many of the Commission's event posters and programs for the last several years.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the April 19, 2011 (5-0-3 (Kevin Allen, Dick Bauer, and Natasha Burger)) and the April 25, 2011 (2-0-6(Kevin Allen, Dick Bauer, Natasha Burger**, Tom DeYoung*, Kelly Speakman, and Todd Zinn*)) Minutes as amended.

DELIBERATION OF HPC CASES



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The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission held public hearings on the following applications, all in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and the City of Somerville Ordinance (Sections 7-16 – 7-28):

HPC 11.36 – 8 Mount Vernon Street
Applicants: Barbara & Fermin Castro

4/21/11

1. Cover concrete wall and chain link fence with fieldstones to height of 6’ at rear of property; and
2. Construct a low stone wall around garden area next to driveway and along the sidewalk to match area previously completed.

Barbara Castro presented: Once they installed the new fence, it became obvious that the slope of the land was not level. They would like to continue with the low stone wall that they began in the back to continue under the fence and along the driveway. This would give the yard areas better definition. They also would like to construct the stone wall at the rear of the property, approved in 2007 but never undertaken.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, and photographs of the building.

There was no Discussion

Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for the above proposal with no conditions because the proposal met with HPC Guidelines.

HPC 11.37 – 9 Westwood Road
Applicants: Sylvia & Arthur Shurcliff

4/22/11

1. Remove chain link fence;
2. Install 6’ board and lattice fence at rear of property; and
3. Install 42” lattice fence at sides of property.

Sylvia Shurcliff presented: She would like to remove the existing chain-link fence and install a board and lattice fence similar to that of her neighbors’ with a low diamond lattice fence along the other edges of the rear yard.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, and photographs of the building.

Discussion: While the color of paint is not under the purview of the Commission, some of the Commissioners were curious as to whether the fence would be painted. The Applicant thought that they would wait to see how it weathered before making a decision to paint. It was recommended that if they chose to paint that the color should compliment the house.

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the above proposal with no conditions.*

REVIEW AND COMMENT

HPC 11.43 – 399 Medford Street, St. Ann’s Roman Catholic Church

Wendall Kalsow presented: *Now that the old parish hall has been demolished, they propose to relocate the existing door on the west side of the northwest corner of the St. Ann Parish Church, +/- 15'-0" to the north side of the northwest corner. The new wood door will have stained glass sidelights and a granite lintel to match the existing granite lintels over the windows and doors in the church. The door will provide accessible access from grade level into a new interior entry, and will be the primary entry into the church from the new meditation garden, and the accessible parking lot. An elevator vent is being disguised as a chimney with matching brick veneer which is being used due to weight constraints. They expect that the project will be completed this year.*

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, plans and elevations dated 4/20/11 and 5/17/11 by McGinley Kalsow & Associates*

Discussion: *Questions were asked about effect of blinding the basement windows on the interior spaces and the use of the window well on the side of the building. The windows were located along a utility corridor and not necessary for the public interior spaces.*

No Decisions were made.

** HPC 11.44 – 191 Highland Avenue, the Armory

5/17/11

Applicants: William T. Schaefer, Architect for Alan Carrier and Joseph Sater, Owners

William T. Schaefer presented with additional comment from Alan Carrier. *The Armory is a non-profit that benefits the community. It is not breaking even. The AARB originally agreed that the slope was acceptable if not optimal. However a Somerville resident complained that the slope of the ramp did not exactly meet code along with other items to the AARB who then withdrew their approval. All the other items have been addressed. They are now submitting plans to demolish and reconstruct the entry ramp to meet ADA requirements. The project must be completed by June 15, 2011. The ramp must have a shallower pitch to meet the requirements and therefore must be lengthened into the building. The door will have an added piece at the bottom. They would like to color the new concrete path. The proposed colors are Scofield® Integral Color Red Brick, Winter Rose or Stone Gray.*

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *Noting that the Armory is one of the most distinctive buildings in the City and that the drawbridge ramp is a character-defining feature of the castle, its alteration would not be desirable. Alternatives to the use of the front entry were reviewed. None were adequate as they involved going through the main function room to access other parts of the Building. Because the function room is often in use, it is not a suitable travel path for those planning to use other parts of the building. The neighbors also strenuously were opposed to any important entry from the parking area.*

As to the proposed alteration, the Commission did not see how they would meet the ADA requirements since the handrail could not be continuous along the length of the ramp as it enters the building. This is because the original door would open out over it. The door would also require alterations that would not be desirable.

After much discussion of alternative approaches to the entry, the Commission believes that creating a slight rise, perhaps 2", in the sidewalk to where it meets the ramp and raising the ramp from the sidewalk could make the slope meet the ADA requirements. This would be a benefit to the entire community.

Various concrete coloration pigments were reviewed. Sunset Red was preferred as the tone was light.

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, Preservation Brief 32, ADA Accessibility Guidelines 4.1.7 Accessible Buildings: Historic Preservation, plans dated 4/29/11 by William Schaefer and Associates, chart from Scofield® Integral Color, and photographs of the building.*

Decisions: *Staff to talk to other City Departments to investigate whether raising the sidewalk can be done. The ramp will have a consistent rise and may be colored Sunset Red. They also voted unanimously (7-0) for the Staff to draft a letter to the AAB to let them know that discussions are underway to find a solution to the quandary.*

**** received after the official posting of the Agenda.** Property is not a Local Historic District. Comments will be referred to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for their approval as holders of the Preservation Restriction on the property.

DEMOLITION REVIEWS

9-MONTH REVIEW PERIOD

HPC 11.02 Demolition – 39-43 Elmwood Street, circa 1898 wood-frame house 2/15/11
Applicants: Charles Aggouras and Daniel DiPierro, GFC Development Inc

The house at 39 Elmwood was ‘preferably preserved’ because its history reflects the neighborhood from its earliest day as the home of the local baker and Italian grocer, to the home of French-Canadian immigrants whose names are inscribed on the Roll of Honor, and who lost their lives as soldiers in World War II. Architecturally, the house fits in well with the residential streetscape to the north and south.

A Working Group including members of the Preservation Commission, Staff for the HPC and Planning Division, and the developers have held three meetings to date (3/4/11, 3/11/1, 4/1/11) to develop site plans and save the house at 39 Elmwood Street. Developers now state that they plan to retain the house and develop around it.

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED

None this month.

STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENTS AS PER REQUEST OF OTHER DIVISIONS

HPC 11.33 - 22-24 Hudson Street 4/20/11
Applicant: Planning Division

Shed dormer on west side of the building to be constructed in a manner similar to others on the street.

HPC 11.34 – 21 Cedar Street

4/29/11

Applicant: Planning Division

Rear addition will have an asymmetrical gable roof, not particularly visible from the street. One early owner was an Alderman at Large at the beginning of the 20th century.

HPC 33.35 – 32 Dartmouth Street

4/29/11

Applicant: Planning Division

The proposed rear porches are minimally visible from the street. Staff did not find proposed railing and screening system to be sympathetic to the architecture or the house and recommends using a generic rail system with awnings or shades. The son of the original family was a member of the Escadrille Lafayette and earned a Croix de Guerre. They were also related to the Irelands and to William Preble Jones.

HPC 11.40 – 13 Elm Street

Applicant: Storefront Improvement Program

New paint color and a consistent sign and awning system have been recommended by the City's consultant. No "adverse effect".

HPC 11.41 – 27 Porter Street

5/12/11

Applicant: Planning Division

Large residential addition is proposed with handicapped access to be attached to pre-1874 house which is next door to 23 Porter Street LHD. Because the garage will be very visible from the street and is next to a listed property, Staff has recommended installing carriage house doors on the 2-car garage and a dormer above them, as a way to recall the barn that used to be on the lot. The Applicant has agreed and already submitted plans to incorporate these features on the garage..

DEMOLITIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF NON-APPLICABILITY REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY STAFF

HPC 11.38 – 42 Meacham Road

Applicant: Arturo Nieto, Contractor for Norma Elias, Owner

1. Replace 15 pieces of slate;
2. Install 12' of copper apron; and
3. Re-flash dormer and vent pipe

HPC 11.39 – 11 Putnam Street

Applicant: Becky Long, Greater Boston Properties for 9-11 Realty Trust

1. Replace 10 windows with new Boston Layout, 2/2 wood sash in Unit #2 to match existing windows; and
2. Replace 3 windows with vinyl sash not visible from the public right of way.

PROJECT UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS

Project Updates

- **LHD Expansion Project** (Brandon Wilson)
 - Group E: Joint public hearing with the BOA Legislative Matters Committee now scheduled for Tues. June 7th, 7:00pm.
 - To date 9 of the 19 property owners have responded to 2 mailings, and 6 “Understand,” 3 are opposed; other 10 owners reside in Somerville, and are being contacted for a 3rd time by phone or in person
 - Goal is to submit the package of recommendations to the BOA in June before budget hearings and summer recess
 - Group D: Recording of BOA approved LHDs at Registry of Deeds are in progress, with maps now finalized
 - Properties on Hold: Decision made to hold informational meeting in Ward 5 with proposed LHD owners in Magoun Square area and others. Will create new PowerPoint presentation to highlight adverse impacts of no LHD protection in new transit areas
 - Winter-Spring Preservation Newsletter being finalized for intended mailing in May-June
 - LHD Plaque Program to be sponsored again, with plaques offered at no cost to newly designated LHD owners.

- **2011 Surveying Projects** (Brandon Wilson and Kristi Chase)
 - Union Square LHD – decision changed, so proposed LHD will now incorporate more than the U.S. Post Office site, and include 20 new properties as surveyed and recommended by PAL consultants. Larger LHD will now include commercial, residential, and religious properties.
 - Draft of Preliminary Report ready for review and comment
 - Vote to submit Preliminary Report to MHC needed tonight.

Decisions:

- It was unanimously (7-0) decided that the Staff should submit a Report to the MHC and the Planning Department recommending designation for all the properties surveyed.

- **2011 Preservation Awards Program** (Brandon Wilson and Derick Snare)
 - New editor at Somerville Journal has agreed to publish interviews with many of Director and Preservation Award winners each week
 - Somerville resident Marian Berkowitz agreed to interview, photograph, and write rough drafts of articles; Brandon is editing each and submitting to SJ weekly; see 81 Walnut St article last week (5-12-11); 438 Broadway expected this week
 - Derick has completed working with SHS CAD students on their house drawings; several improvements in evidence
 - SHS Art students have completed their drawings, teachers have forwarded, and SHPC has selected winning drawings
 - Century Bank has agreed to sponsor the framing project and Stanhope Framers of Union Square to discount the framing work substantially
 - Kevin is working on the PowerPoint presentation for Dick and Abby to deliver that evening
 - Awards Ceremony invitations sent out; refreshments being secured; more donations beyond Tom, still very welcome!
 - Tom and Ryan have volunteered to help Kristi set up the drawings exhibit once again
 - 2010 Awards Exhibit remains at Somerville Armory, but now within their new Café which is expected to open very soon. All welcome to view.

- **2011 Preservation Month Calendar of Events** (Brandon Wilson)
 - East Somerville Walking Tour with East Somerville Main Streets – Sun. May 1st, 2-4:30pm. Very successful with nearly 50 participants, from all over Boston metropolitan area, and abundant refreshments at Vinny’s Restaurant at conclusion.
 - Milk Row Cemetery Tour with Barbara Mangum – Tues. May 5th 6-7:30 pm. Despite rainy weather, hardy group of 12 attended.
 - Jane’s Walk in Union Square with Union Square Main Streets – Sat. May 7. Lively group of 25 joined in the walk and shared their observations.
 - “Researching Your Somerville House and Family,” with Somerville Library – re-scheduled to Thurs. May 19th, 7-8:30 pm. Central Library. Kristi will be sharing her expertise too.
 - *Citizen Somerville* book signing and panel discussion – date tentatively re-scheduled to Sat. June 18th, 2 – 4pm. Somerville Museum
 - Historic Bike Tour, with Somerville Bike Committee, Sun. May 22nd, 1:30 – 4:30 pm. Meet at Somerville City Hall, with refreshments at Somerville Museum, to coincide with reception for new exhibit there, “Small Obsessions” and Artist Talks. No rain date yet.
 - 2011 Preservation Awards Ceremony – Thurs. May 26th, 6:30-9pm. Somerville Museum

Other Business

- **SHPC Operational Affairs** (Brandon Wilson)
 - Election of Officers tonight
Dick Bauer was unanimously (7-0-1) re-elected Chair;
Abby Freedman was unanimously (7-0-1) re-elected as Vice Chair; and
Tom DeYoung was unanimously (7-0) elected Secretary.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule for 2011: June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20.

All of the applications summarized above are available for public inspection at the Commission’s Office on the third floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, on Mon. -Wed. 9:00 am - 4:30 pm; Thurs. 9:00 am-7:30 pm; and Fri. 9:00 am-12:30 pm. Since cases may be continued to a later date(s), please check the agenda on the City’s website, or call before attending (tel.: (617) 625-6600 x. 2525). Continued cases will not be re-advertised. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the hearing, by fax to 617-625-0722, by e-mail to kchase@somervillema.gov, or by mail to the Historic Preservation Commission, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143.