

HAMILTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION / HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Teleconference

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF March 25, 2025

HHDC Members Present: Chair Scott Clements, Liz Wheaton, Kristen Weiss

HHDC Coordinator: Mark Connors

Others in Attendance: Garrett Moynihan (Howell Custom Building Group), Jeff Cross (Cross Property Management), and Carlo Tarini, JN Picariello Co.

Call to Order

Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) Chair Scott Clements called the HHDC meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. – there was a quorum present.

Consideration and discussion of Demolition Application – Single-family home at 375 Bridge Street

Mr. Clements noted that the Commission conducted a site walk of the property in advance of the meeting and introduced Garrett Moynihan of Howell Custom Building Group to explain the application. Mr. Moynihan noted the home was originally built in 1900 as an early Colonial Revival. It is approximately 7,500 square-feet. He indicated they are proposing to completely raze the structure and its foundation and a two-car garage in an accessory structure. The proposal is to replace the structure with a similarly-sized house in a similar footprint. They plan to preserve the existing rose garden, viewsheds, and driveway. Mr. Clements noted that the applicant indicated they are planning to salvage many architectural fixtures of historic value. Mr. Moynihan confirmed that was accurate and consisted of approximately 30 items, including door knobs, stone mantels, a wood-burning stove, a soapstone sink, and several other items.

Mr. Clements asked if any members of the public wished to provide comments. There were none. He asked for comments from the Commission. Ms. Wheaton indicated she had no concerns. Ms. Weiss noted it was always sad to see a historic home demolished, but noted the home was not visible from the road and was not integral to the community. She did not feel it was a good candidate for Demolition Delay. Mr. Clements agreed. He noted the home was not associated with a historic figure or event and was not a visible, important part of the community. Ms. Wheaton noted that many features of the building and property were being lovingly preserved by the new owners and contractor. The Commission agreed it would record its decision in a letter to be filed with the Town Clerk and distributed to the Building Department.

Ms. Wheaton moved that the Commission make the finding that the home is not preferably preserved and therefore not subject to a Demolition Delay. Mr. Clements seconded the motion. All voted in favor (3-0) and the motion passed.

Consideration and Discussion of Demolition Application – Accessory barn at 920 Highland Street

Mr. Clements noted the Commission conducted a site walk of the barn and reviewed the associated paperwork, including a structural analysis. He asked if any members of the public had comments. There were none. He then turned to whether the structure met the criteria to be preferably preserved. Ms. Wheaton indicated she believed it did. Ms. Weiss noted that the barn was a prominent structure along a public way. Ms. Wheaton and Mr. Clements agreed. Mr. Clements noted that while there were structural issues, there were no imminent dangers associated with the building. He felt it was a good candidate for Demolition Delay.

The applicant, Mr. Cross, noted the owners were concerned about the integrity of the foundation and that the lumber was compromised. He said the building was unusable at this time and noted other concerns about the quality of the building. He spoke about the owners' plans for the site.

Mr. Clements spoke about the Commission's role related to historic buildings governed under the Demolition Delay Bylaw and recommended the owners consider alternatives to a complete demolition. Mr. Cross spoke about potential scenarios involving partial demolition of the building. Mr. Clements said the HHDC had not been presented other options. Ms. Weiss said the Commission's role is to determine if it's important to try to preserve the building. Mr. Clements proposed discussing potential options for preservation or partial preservation with the owners. Ms. Wheaton said she did not believe that was the Commission's role; the charge is to determine if the building is preferably preserved. Mr. Cross said part of the barn was partially compromised and spoke about potential partial demolition scenarios. Mr. Clements said the preference would be to preserve the whole of the structure but said it would be helpful to review options. This was followed by some discussion of the Commission's appropriate role under the Bylaw. Ms. Weiss noted the Commission's authority is limited – it is only a one-year delay – but the Commission would like to work with the owners to help preserve the building. Mr. Connors said that if the Commission wanted to initiate the Demolition Delay, it would need to make that decision after a public hearing. This was followed by some discussion of the procedural steps under the Bylaw.

Ms. Weiss moved that the Commission schedule a public hearing for April 22, 2025 to make a determination whether to activate a one-year Demolition Delay of the accessory barn at 920 Highland Avenue. Mr. Clements seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

625 Bay Road – Request for exemption from HERS rating requirement under Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code

Carlo Tarini, JN Picariello Co., described the property which included a historic 1880s era residence and a newly constructed barn with the kitchen serving as a connector so it is one single structure. Those projects were previously approved by the Commission. He said the project under current Energy Code triggers a HERS rating to test the entire building, including the historic structure, for its complete energy performance. The request is to exempt the historic home from the requirement to avoid disturbing the historic details of the home. He said the new barn would completely meet the Energy Code. After some discussion of the Energy Code, the Commission agreed that improvements necessary to meet the HERS rating would disturb the integrity of the historic building and its original details.

Mr. Clements made a motion that the Commission draft a letter to the Building Commissioner requesting the exemption from the HERS rating. Ms. Weiss seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Review/approval draft minutes of February 11, 2025

Mr. Clements noted corrections relating to a misspelling and clarification of the discussion concerning the Town Hall renovation project.

Ms. Wheaton made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections incorporated. Mr. Clements seconded the motion. All voted in favor (3-0) and the motion passed.

Other Business

The Commission briefly referenced discussion at the previous meeting and whether the Historic District Guidelines should be revised to permit fiberglass gutters; this was determined to be unnecessary since the Guidelines permit the use of synthetic materials. Mr. Connors noted that he had looked into 925 Bay Road, where the demolition delay has expired; there are no pending permits for the building.

Adjourn

Ms. Weiss moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:45 pm. Mr. Clements seconded the motion. All voted in favor (3-0) and the motion passed.

Prepared by:

Mark Connors