



**CITY OF PLAINFIELD**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, ROOM 202  
 PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060



Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor

Sandra Gurshman, Chairwoman  
 Lawrence Ferrara, Vice Chairman

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**JUNE 24, 2014, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR LIBRARY, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, PLAINFIELD, NJ**

**CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC NOTICE**

Chairwoman Sandy Gurshman called the regular meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:35 PM and in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act read aloud the following: “This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act in that a notice was published in the Courier News on 2/8/2014, and the notice of this meeting was posted in the City Clerk and Planning Division offices.”

2014 Historic Preservation Commission Name, Class Designation (Term Ends)	1/28/14	2/25/14	3/25/14	4/22/14	5/27/14	6/24/14	7/22/14	8/26/14	9/23/14	10/28/14	11/18/14	12/16/14
Lawrence Ferrara, Class C (12/31/14)	X		X	X	X	X						
James Galvin, Alternate #1, Class A (12/31/14)	X		X									
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/14)	X		X	X	X	X						
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/14)	X		X	X	X	X						
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/15)	X			X	X	X						
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh, Class C (12/31/15)	X		X	X		X						
Jan Jasper, Class C (12/31/16)			X		X							
Elizabeth King, Class C (12/31/16)	X		X	X	X	X						
John Favazzo, Class A (12/31/17)	n/a		n/a	X	X	X						
Larry Quirk (12/31/17)	n/a		n/a	X	X	X						
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2 year term)												

*February 25 meeting cancelled (inclement weather)*

**PRESENTATION OF MAY 27, 2014, MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Michelson made a motion, seconded by Ms. King, and unanimously approved to accept the May 27, 2014, meeting minutes as submitted. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh abstained from voting since she was absent on May 27.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Carried Certificate of Appropriateness Application

A. HPC 13-15. 1007 Watchung Avenue. Block 639, Lot 16. Applicant & Owner- Elaine Burrell.

Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that the hearing was carried from April 22 and that the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. Ms. Burrell introduced herself and informed the Commission that she is proposing to construct a detached garage in the rear yard of 1007 Watchung Avenue. The garage is 22' x 25' and is 15' high. There will be two overhead doors, HardiPlank siding, and a pitched roof. Chairwoman Gurshman commented that the gate is not tremendously visible from Watchung Avenue. Ms. Burrell commented that there would be one window on the left elevation, and possibly a side door. Chairwoman Gurshman added that if a door is added, the sketch should be submitted to reflect the door since the door is not shown on the plans.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented; Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to approve application HPC 13-15 as submitted with the condition that if the Applicant intends to have a side door on the garage, it should be added to the plan. Mr. Michelson seconded the motion; there was no further discussion and the Commission approved the motion unanimously by voice vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Proposed North Avenue Streetscape Improvements**

City Engineer Jacqueline Foushee of Remington, Vernick & Arango Engineers, 300 Penhorn Avenue, Secaucus, New Jersey, introduced herself and a streetscape improvement plan for North Avenue between Park and Watchung avenues. Commission members were given plans and estimates dated October 19, 2012, prior to the meeting. The improvements include milling / resurfacing, new bluestone and colored concrete sidewalks, curb replacement, substandard inlet replacement, and installation of street trees, planters, trash receptacles, benches, streetlights, bicycle lockers, crosswalks, and signage. As part of the streetscape improvement plan, approximately 11 parking spaces on the south side of North Avenue will be eliminated and an enlarged sidewalk area is proposed.

Ms. Foushee informed the HPC that the city is pursuing a New Jersey Department of Transportation grant to assist with the funding of the streetscape improvements. In 2012 the city filed for a similar grant but was not approved since the North Avenue train station area was not yet designated a Transit Village.

After Ms. Foushee's presentation of the plans and estimates, the HPC expressed support for the project with the suggestions to include a kiosk and to involve the Shade Tree Commission when selecting street trees species, and planting locations. Chairwoman Gurshman reminded Ms. Foushee that a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed prior to any construction; Ms. Gurshman also recommended to Ms. Foushee that she provide the HPC with specification sheets of any hardscape items prior to purchasing.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers, 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City said the plan is great; it is in the area that Landmark Developers is investing in on North Avenue. Hearing no further comment, Chairwoman Gurshman closed the meeting to the public. When asked when the city might find out about the grant application, Ms. Foushee said she hopes to know by winter. Ms. King made a motion to issue a letter of support for the proposed North Avenue streetscape improvements as shown on the plan prepared by Remington, Vernick & Arango Engineers. Mr. Michelson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

### **2. New Certificate of Appropriateness Applications**

#### **A. HPC 14-05. 128 West Eighth Street. Block 713, Lot 9. Applicant & Owner- WAM. LLC**

The Applicant / Owner was not present and Mr. Bauman did not receive public meeting notice so it was not known whether the Commission has jurisdiction to proceed. Chairwoman Gurshman noted that the porch railing that was installed without permits is now gone, but the owner still needs to appear before the Commission because of the fence installed without permits. The Commission did not act on this application and Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that it would be rescheduled for July 22, 2014.

#### **B. HPC 14-08. 1228 Watchung Avenue. Block 821, Lot 27. Applicant & Owner- Monica Slater-Stokes**

Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that the Applicant / Owner has served notice and the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the application. The Applicant / Owner Monica Slater-Stokes introduced herself to the Commission. Ms. Slater-Stokes is proposing front, rear, and side yard fencing. The front yard fencing is to be 4' high wood picket. The side and rear fencing is to be 6' high wood stockade. Ms. Slater-Stokes cited security issues regarding a neighboring property to the west whose condition has deteriorated over the last few years. Ms. Slater-Stokes said there would be a smooth, sloping transition between the six-foot and four-foot fences; she added that there would be no gates across the driveway. Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented on the application. Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Ms. King made a motion to approve application HPC 14-08 as submitted with the condition of a smooth transition between the six-foot and four-foot fences. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

### 3. Referral from the Plainfield Planning Board

On August 7, 2014, the Planning Board is hearing a site plan application for three ground floor retail units and five residential apartments on the upper floors at 177-185 North Avenue, Block 313, Lot 12- a property located in the North Avenue Historic District and owned by 177-185 North, LLC. The Planning Board referred the application to the HPC for comment.

Gabe Bailer of Landmark Developers, 675 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City introduced himself to the Commission. Mr. Bailer explained that the proposal is to add a fifth residential apartment in an area of the building that is now attic space. Mr. Bailer said the roofline will be changed but it is set back eight feet- he was not sure if the roofline change could be seen from the street. Mr. Bailer further stated that the plans show a new 28" x 34" double-hung window for egress purposes on the attic level, rear elevation.

Ms. Hunton asked Mr. Bailer how old is the existing roof frame that is proposed to be removed; Mr. Bailer said he was not sure. Ms. Michelson asked Mr. Bailer if the façade work is completed; Mr. Bailer said the façade work is 60-75% complete. Mr. Michelson told Mr. Bailer he needs to file as built plans. Mr. Bailer added that Landmark Developers received federal tax credits for the rehabilitation work.

Ms. Hunton asked Mr. Bailer if loads were calculated; she wondered what the structural framing below is like- the space was meant to be an unoccupied attic, and it needs to be ensured that the building will not be in danger with the introduction of an apartment in the attic space- this is a concern. Mr. Bailer said the construction management team reviews these issues. Chairwoman Gurshman asked if the slope of the proposed roof is adequate to shed snow and ice; Mr. Bailer responded yes. Chairwoman Gurshman commented that there is quite a variance in apartment size but that is not the purview of the Commission.

Mr. Favazzo asked Mr. Bailer if light/air calculations were made and if there are any windows proposed or existing that are not lot-line windows.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Favazzo expressed concern as to whether one can get enough light and air in the unit, and the floor load calculations. Mr. Favazzo further stated he is not concerned with the change in roofline- most likely it cannot be seen, but he is concerned with the slope of the roof, snow load, and live load. He is more concerned about structure and habitation rather than visual impact to the district.

When asked if the apartments would have access to the basement, Mr. Bailer said the basement is accessible only from the first floor retail tenants. Ms. Hunton said she is curious what can be seen because of the change in the roofline- she is not comfortable that the roofline cannot be seen. Chairwoman Gurshman said it could be seen because the building next door is missing. Mr. Michelson added the new roofline can be seen from the rear and side elevations. Ms. King asked Mr. Bailer why he was not converting the attic space on the 177 side of the building; Mr. Bailer said there is no attic space in that side of the building. Chairwoman Gurshman added that if the apartment was not built the attic space could be used for storage space for the two apartments on the 185 side of the building.

Ms. Hunton told the Commission that she has reservations based upon her experience with structural loads; the Applicant should provide more information to the Planning Board- they can address the preparation of the building to make sure it is structurally sound. Chairwoman Gurshman wondered if it made economic sense for the apartment given the structural work that is needed. There is a visual change in the roofline, and the new roofline is not ideal in terms of slope. Chairwoman Gurshman added the Commission looks at the visual impact and preservation of the building.

Mr. Favazzo questions the apartment's habitability in terms of where the windows are placed- the apartment needs a lot more windows. Mr. Favazzo said he was not sure if skylights count in light/air calculations, but he is sure that lot-line windows do not count. Mr. Bailer said the apartment would have central air conditioning.

Ms. Hunton summarized the Commission's consensus of concerns: 1) structural loads; 2) roof framing; 3) does the apartment meet the code for light to air ratio; 4) concerns about the slope of the roof- does it meet snow load

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<sup>1</sup> Lot Line Windows are windows installed in an interior lot line wall, meaning in the walls of the building which run along & directly adjacent to the side property lines. (<http://permitspace.blogspot.com/2007/09/lot-line-windows.html>)

requirements; 5) did not review a framing plan- would like to see one; and 5) to fully assess the impact of the change in roofline from the vacant lot, a side elevation is needed. Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented, Chairwoman Gurshman closed the public portion of the meeting. Chairwoman Gurshman thanked Mr. Bailer for appearing, and Mr. Bailer thanked the Commission for their time.

Ms. King left the meeting at 8:41 PM

#### **4. Discussion: Cedar Shake Exterior Siding Replacement at 910 Madison Avenue**

William Meyers of 502 Woodland Avenue introduced himself to the Commission as the contractor hired by the property owner to replace cedar shake exterior siding, including new curved siding. Commission members reviewed pictures of the curved design of the shingles; Mr. Meyers proceeded to tell the Commission how to achieve the existing curvature for the new siding. Mr. Meyers distributed several sample shingles. Ms. Hunton asked if the proposed shingles are the same size in length and width; Mr. Meyers said all shingles are the same length- eighteen inches, but have random widths. The shingles on the front and rear elevations are being repaired, while the shingles on each side are being replaced.

#### **5. Request for Time Extension: HPC 12-06- 900 Madison Avenue, Block 759, Lot 1, Van Wyck Brooks HD**

Mr. Bauman informed the Commission that he met with the owner and the owner told him he could perform the window replacement on all of the windows except the bay windows at this time and he would like a time extension for the bay windows. Mr. Bauman further informed the Commission that the owner brought a wood frame sample window with him to the meeting, but he asked the owner to provide him with specification sheets for the window replacements. Mr. Bauman requested that the owner provide the time extension request in writing. As of the night of the meeting, the owner had not provided Mr. Bauman with specification sheets or a written request for additional time. With nothing to discuss, Mr. Quirk made a motion to carry the matter to July 22, 2014. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

#### **6. Committee Reports**

##### **A. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee**

- Postcards. Mr. Bauman distributed postcards to the Commission. He and the Tax Assessor are meeting soon to obtain mailing labels.
- Spanish translation of the city's Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites. The Commission reviewed a translation sample prepared by Juan Ayala of GRID Design Studios, LLC. Mr. Bauman noted several questions to relay back to Mr. Ayala concerning the translation, and the availability of a second proofread, as well as layout and design services.
- Revising Multiple Listings Service (MLS) forms to include historic designations. No report.

B. Ordinance Revision Committee. Mr. Bauman said the Planning Board is preparing revisions to the ordinance and he will keep the Historic Preservation Commission updated on this process.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Michelson made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Ferrara; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Scott Bauman*

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: July 8, 2014

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission July 22, 2014