



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
AUGUST 26, 2014, 7:30 PM, CITY HALL 1ST 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 7:37 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	X					
James Galvin, Alternate #1, Class A (12/31/14)	X		X									
Sandra Gurshman, Class B (12/31/14)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
William Michelson, Class B (12/31/14)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
Bill Garrett, Class B (12/31/15)	X			X	X	X		X				
Patricia Turner Kavanaugh, Class C (12/31/15)	X		X	X		X		X				
Jan Jasper, Class C (12/31/16)			X		X		X					
Elizabeth King, Class C (12/31/16)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
John Favazzo, Class A (12/31/17)	n/a		n/a	X	X	X	X					
Larry Quirk Class A (12/31/17)	n/a		n/a	X	X	X	X	X				
Alternate Member #2 VACANT (2 year term)												

February 25 meeting cancelled (inclement weather)

PRESENTATION OF JULY 22, 2014, MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to carry the presentation of the July 22, 2014, meeting minutes to September 23, 2014; Ms. King seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Carried Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

- A. HPC 14-05. 128 West Eighth Street. Block 713, Lot 9. Van Wyck Brooks Historic District
 After-the-fact approval for the installation of a front yard fence. Applicant & Owner: W.A.M., LLC
 The applicant was not present. Mr. Bauman reported that the applicant contacted him two weeks ago to inform him that he modified the fence so that it looked similar to the 2007 photograph. Chairwoman

Gurshman added that she inspected the fence and noted that the applicant cut the posts shorter; Mr. Quirk agreed with Chairwoman Gurshman. With no other comments by the Commission, Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to accept HPC 14-05 as it applies to the front yard fence. Mr. Quirk seconded the motion and it was approved by all present by voice vote with the exception of Mr. Michelson who voted “no.”

B. HPC 14-07. 231 East Ninth Street. Block 830, Lot 9. Crescent Area Historic District

After-the-fact approval for front porch floor, stair, railing, and spindle replacement. Applicant & Owner: SYNC, LLC (Susan Wong). Chairwoman Gurshman said the subcommittee of herself, Mr. Quirk, and Mr. Favazzo visited the site, along with the owner and the summary of the meeting was provided in the meeting packet.

Mr. Quirk said he was concerned over the railing and steps leading to the porch- the replacement railing is not what was there- the spindles and railing are different. Mr. Quirk said that the whole railing system needs to be replaced to be in tune with the house. The right side and left side porch floor are dichotomous- the applicant repaired the left side flooring by adding a layer of flooring onto the old floor. Mr. Quirk cited concern over cupping of the floorboards as tripping hazards. Cupping, and therefore tripping, hazards currently exist. The previous owner performed the right side of the porch flooring.

Ms. Hunton asked Ms. Wong, PO Box 836, South Plainfield NJ, the condition of the handrail when she bought the house. Ms. Wong said the railing was in poor condition. Ms. Hunton said the railing as it was rebuilt by the applicant does not meet code and is not consistent with the City’s Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Properties. Mr. Quirk described the condition of the railings that were torn down- he wants those railings replicated and wants to maintain as much of the prior look as possible. Ms. Hunton told Ms. Wong that her contractor did not serve her well and the Commission could provide a typical drawing for a typical railing if it would help. Mr. Quirk also cited concern over the condition of the porch column base on the right side of the steps.

Ms. Wong said it would cost her \$20,000 to have both sides of the porch floor replaced and that is too much, citing a concern about evacuating tenants. Mr. Quirk said to Ms. Wong if the joists are solid, she is looking at about one fourth of that price.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public; no one from the public commented. Mr. Michelson made a motion to deny without prejudice HPC 14-07 for after the fact approval of porch floor, steps and railing pending a review by the Construction Official and Zoning Officer concerning the structural integrity of the joists, concern over the material, design, and installation of the porch flooring, and concerns over the replacement railing, which does not match what was removed. Ms. Turner Kavanaugh seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

2. New Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

A. HPC 14-12. 1035 Hillside Avenue. Block 816, Lot 9. Hillside Avenue Historic District

Proposed additions and alterations to residence. Applicant & Owner: Carlos Gonzalez Carlos Gonzalez, Janet Gonzalez, and Amy Gonzalez (1035 Hillside Avenue), and their architect Joseph Krawiec (409 Pierce Street, South Plainfield) introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. Gonzalez said he is proposing an extension to his home. He received help from Mr. Bauman of the Planning Division, and he had his architect come up with a design and approach to respect the existing building. The plans were included in the meeting packet and Mr. Gonzalez is ready to answer questions.

Mr. Quirk asked what is the purpose of the accessory building on site; Mr. Gonzalez replied it is for storage. Mr. Michelson asked when the detached garage was built; Mr. Gonzalez responded it was built in 2003, and he is adding a second door to the garage. Mr. Michelson asked Mr. Bauman if the proposal requires any variances; Mr. Bauman replied that the proposal does not require any bulk variances.

Chairwoman Gurshman asked Mr. Gonzalez why he is reducing the size of three windows on the second floor, north elevation; Mr. Krawiec said there are water problems with flat roofs, so he created a roof pitch as steep as possible and this affected the size of the windows. Mr. Quirk asked if the proposed brick veneer would match the existing brick; Mr. Gonzalez responded “yes.” Mr. Krawiec added that the addition is not flush in alignment with the existing structure, and the exposure of the siding will be the same as the existing siding. Ms. Hunton asked what material the new railings would be made of; Mr. Krawiec responded they would be made of wood.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Mr. Garrett asked what material the proposed faux shutters are made of; Mr. Krawiec responded that the new shutters would be made of wood. Ms. Hunton suggested that perhaps faux shutters should not be added; Mr. Krawiec said that the faux shutters make the windows look bigger and it is more attractive than without shutters. Ms. Hunton asked about the windows; Mr. Krawiec said the new windows are vinyl-the house already has 65 vinyl windows, and houses look the happiest when the windows look the same-and he is asking for six additional vinyl windows. Ms. Hunton said in this case it makes sense to continue with vinyl windows.

With no further discussion, Ms. Turner Kavanaugh made a motion to approve HPC 14-12 for the proposed addition and driveway modifications as per the plans prepared by Mr. Krawiec. Ms. King seconded the motion. Mr. Michelson made a motion to add a condition pending that the two accessory structures did receive a Certificate of Appropriateness; Ms. Turner Kavanaugh did not accept the condition to her motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote. Mr. Bauman said he would check on the status of the two accessory structures and get back to the Commission.

- B. HPC 14-10. 911-915 Madison Avenue. Block 758, Lot 31. Van Wyck Brooks Historic District**
Installation of 6’ high board on board wooden fence at rear of property, and a 6’ high aluminum fence and gate in the side yard. Applicant & Owner: Arne Aakre & Geraldine Heydt
Mr. Arne Aakre of 911-915 Madison Avenue explained the proposal to the Commission. The 6’ high board on board wooden fence begins at the northeast corner of the property and runs southwest 115 feet. The front yard metal fence is 6’ high and is set back 42 feet from the front property line. The gate is designed like the rest of the fence.

Chairwoman Gurshman opened the meeting to the public. No one from the public commented. Mr. Michelson made a motion to approve HPC 14-10 as submitted. Mr. Garrett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

- C. HPC 14-11. 171-175 North Avenue. Block 313, Lot 3. North Avenue Historic District**
After-the-fact approval for window replacement without Certificate of Appropriateness.
Applicant & Owner: Green Venture Properties, LLC, c/o: Joseph Ponsoda
The Applicant was not present. Mr. Quirk made a motion to carry the application to September 23; Ms. King seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

3. Discussion- Proposed Ground Sign with LED Display at 516 West Sixth Street- St. Mary's Church

Mr. Bauman cited Section 17:9-51K.5 of the city land use ordinance that prohibits LED signs; St. Mary's Church was recently denied an LED sign by the city zoning officer. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the sign, not for the Commission to make any decision on such a sign.

Fr. Manuel of St. Mary's Church and their architect Raj of Crane Associates, PC (313 East Main Street, Somerville), introduced themselves to the Commission. Fr. Manuel explained that a LED sign will display school and church activity information that changes daily. The size of the LED portion is 1' x 5' and will be displayed on one side of the sign only. The messages will be changing, maybe once an hour. Mr. Michelson asked if there would be more than one line at a time; Fr. Manuel said he was not sure. There is no sign in place now.

Ms. Hunton said the Commission should be open-minded to the possibility that the immediate neighbors are not private residences. Mr. Quirk said he would not encourage signs like this in any residential district. After further discussion, Fr. Manuel thanked the Commission for their time.

4. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach / Historic Preservation Awareness Committee

- Postcards. Awaiting the Spanish translation of the postcard to be posted on the HPC website before mailing the postcards to the public.
- Spanish translation of the city's Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites. The professional services contract is under legal review. Ms. Hunton and Juan Ayala of GRID Design Studios, LLC worked out the site layout.
- Revising Multiple Listing Service (MLS) forms to include historic designations. No report.

B. Ordinance Revision Committee. No report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Quirk made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Ms. King; all voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bauman

Scott Bauman, AICP, PP

Principal Planner / HPC Secretary, Plainfield Planning Division

Prepared: September 22, 2014

Approved by the Historic Preservation Commission September 23, 2014