

Posted February 15, 2019

## Warwick Historic District Commission

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Warwick City Hall  
3275 Post Road  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

### MEETING NOTICE/AGENDA

**Wednesday, February 20, 2019**

6:00 p.m.

City Hall Lower Level Conference Room  
3275 Post Road  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

#### **Petition #19-292-465**

#### **Stone Wall Alterations**

#### **69 Fair Street**

#### **House of Hope CDC**

The Petitioner states that three sections of historic stone retaining walls on the subject property, which run along Fair Street and South Fair Street, are bulging outward and are in need of repair. The Petition was continued from the January 16, 2019 meeting in order for the Petitioner to incorporate some of the Commission's suggestions for the proposed repair.

The proposed scope of work for the project includes:

- The removal of a triple-trunked maple tree at the corner of Fair and South Fair Streets
- Filling and leveling low ground section on the Fair Street edge and brining the soil level up to cover about halfway on the topmost stone
- Repairing three sections where stones have moved (Fair Street/South Fair Street corner), left of stairs and approximately halfway from stairs to the driveway at 57 Fair Street

The Department notes the following facts for the Commission's consideration:

1. The Petitioner, a non-profit agency, purchased the property in 2012 to create ten apartments
2. Substantial renovations (a \$2.5 million project) on the subject building were completed in part with the benefit of state Historic Tax Credits
3. The building was originally constructed circa 1820 as an exhibition hall for the Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry and converted into a private residence for R. Rhodes in 1848

4. The property is considered a contributing resource in the Pawtuxet Village Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places
5. The Petitioner has consulted with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) and has received guidance on how to repair the stone walls
6. The new mortar will match the existing mortar in terms of color, texture and composition
7. Stones will be reused where feasible
8. Any new stones will match the type and color of existing stones as closely as possible
9. Weep holes will be provided to permit better drainage through the wall
10. In a letter Dated 11 October 2018, the RIHPHC advised the City that it has concluded that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties

The Department also offers the following Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, as found in Chapter 6.9 of the City's Comprehensive Plan, for the Commission's consideration:

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The Department further notes that:

- 1.) The City's stone walls are tangible links to the City's colonial agrarian past and, as such, hold a unique historic significance for the City.
- 2.) The City's stone walls are continuously threatened by both private and public development and need to be protected.

**Petition #18-292-433 B & C**  
**Residential/Leigh Revens**  
**42 South Fair Street**  
**Pawtuxet Village**

The Petitioner is proposing to raze the existing residence and build a new one in a similar style. The Petitioner states that the property has been deemed beyond repair by the Warwick Building Inspector due to substantial deterioration of the foundation and major damage to the roof. The Petitioner also proposes to subdivide the existing lot in order to build a second residence (also in line with the character of other houses on the street) on the left side of the lot.

The Department notes the following:

- At its October 17, 2019 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to divide Petition #18-292-433 for action into progressive phases: Phase I (#18-292-433-A) being the layout of the lots, relative to the footprints of buildings and other structures and their positions on the lots, with later phases to be taken up after action by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Review; Phase II (#18-292-433B) being the request for demolition of existing structures; and Phase III (#18-292-433C) being the proposed design of structures to be constructed on either lot.

- The Commission voted unanimously to approve Petition #18-292-433A, "to approve the footprint locations on the lots as presented in the Warwick Site Plans prepared for Leigh Revens by Ocean State Planners dated October 3, 2018" with the stipulation that "the action does not imply approval of demolition as requested or any rebuilding on the existing lot."
- The Commission voted unanimously to continue Petitions #18-292-433 B and C.
- At its December 12, 2018 meeting, the Warwick Planning Board granted Master Plan approval for the Petitioner to subdivide (1) one 14,708 square foot parcel with a pre-existing, non-conforming single-family dwelling, having less than required front-yard setback, to create (2) two lots; (1) one 7,354 square foot lot with less than required frontage and lot width, and a pre-existing, non-conforming single family dwelling having less than required front-yard setback, 42 South Fair Street; and (1) one new 7,354 square foot lot with less than required frontage and lot width for the development of a new single-family dwelling with less than required front-yard setback, in an A-7 Residential Zoning District. Findings and stipulations were included in a December 20, 2018 letter to the Petitioner.
- The Warwick Zoning Board approved the Petitioner's request for zoning relief for the construction of the residences at its January 15, 2019 meeting.
- The Warwick Historic Preservation Plan (p. 133) lists as the Henry & Georgia A. Williams House (ca 1890), a 1 ½ story, cross-gable, shingle Queen Anne sidehall-plan cottage with bay window and open shed-roof porch with turned posts and sawn brackets. The Williams were the original owners. It is included on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the larger designation bestowed on Pawtuxet Village.
- In an email dated Friday, September 14, 2018, the Building Inspector, Alfred DeCorte, advised the Planning Department that he has inspected the building and found that the structural integrity has been compromised to the extent that the structure needs to be razed.
- The Petitioner met with the Commission at the September 19, 2018 meeting to review proposed plans for the residence with the Commission and gain their input into the proposed style and design and has submitted revised plans in accordance with the Commission's recommendations.
- On February 13, 2019, the Petitioner submitted a quote from Marc G. Gauvin Builders, of Warwick, to rehabilitate the existing house. The total estimate is \$253,470.
- Based on the most recent revaluation available (2015), according to the Tax Assessor's Office, the property is assessed as follows: Land: \$69,400, Building: \$62,300, Total: \$131,700.
- The Petitioner has also submitted site plans prepared by Ocean State Planners, Inc., and a drainage plan prepared by Gordon R. Archibald, Inc.

It is noted that the Historic District Commission does not have jurisdiction over the Petitioner's ability to subdivide the lot. That review and determination shall be made by the Planning Department Administrative Officer.

The Department offers the following Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, as found in Chapter 6.9 of the City's Comprehensive Plan, for the Commission's consideration:

*New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The Department would request that, if the Commission approves the Petition, a stipulation be included that the Petitioner take extensive photos of the exterior and interior of the property prior to its demolition and that the photos be submitted both in hard copy and digital formats so that there is memorialization of the existing residence in the City's files.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Approval of minutes**
- 2. Discussion about tax incentives for historic preservation**
- 3. Discussion of hosting a statewide RIHPHC training program for local historic district commissions**
- 4. Discussion of applying for a certified local government grant to update the commission's policy manual**