

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 21, 2015 Warwick City Hall Planning Department

The following Commission members and staff were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair
Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair
Mr. Maxwell Pounder
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano
Mr. William McQuade
Ms. Carol Pratt

The following Commission member was absent:

Mr. Barry O'Brien

The Following staff members were present:

Trish Reynolds, Warwick Planning Department
Sue Baker, Warwick Planning Department

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 6:04 p.m.

Review of Petition #14-381-1-7 (Petition #09-381-1,2,3,5,6,7,8,72)

Stone Wall alterations Warwick Neck Avenue The Cottages at Aldrich

Commissioner Tobin introduced the Petition, which had been continued from the December 17, 2014 meeting.

It was explained that the Petitioner, Tim Grenier, was proposing a modification to a previous approval issued by the Commission and he was now asking not to be required to construct columns at the driveway openings but instead to leave them as they are currently constructed.

Commissioner Tobin read into the record the Planning Department recommendation.

Ms. Reynolds presented a slide show of photos that showed the present condition of the stone walls surrounding the property and the current appearance of the new wall openings. The visual line of the wall without piers was noted, and Ms. Reynolds commented, is reflective of the wall's original condition. Ms. Reynolds pointed out where some repairs had been made using new mortar as well as other repairs to the

wall. There is also a wall portion that had abutted a building that has since been demolished but still retains part of the foundation. During the presentation, Commissioner Leslie commented on the attractive appearance of the restored walls.

Ms. Reynolds re-introduced photos taken previously, when the wall was in a considerable state of disrepair, for the record.

Ms. Reynolds also presented to Commissioner Tobin for the record correspondence from several residents voicing either their support of or concern for the project.

She also presented an email from Virginia Hesse, of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. Ms. Hesse, a staff architect, noted that, at the request of the Historic District Commission, she went on-site with another staff architect, the RIHPHC principal archeologist, and their grants manager/preservation planner. (The grants manager/preservation planner has since left the employ of the RIHPHC). Ms. Hesse said they were unanimous in their decision that the work to form the ends was well executed and that the clean opening without new piers to demarcate the opening was appropriate. Creation of piers where there had been none historically present would have created a false sense of historic development. They were satisfied with the work that has been performed.

Resident Jane Austin, of 26 Narragansett Bay Avenue, addressed the Commission and clarified that she was not in opposition of the development but that her ongoing concern has been based on preservation of the wall. She acknowledged the RIHPHC's recommendation and that it was in the Commission's purview to accept it, but asked that Mr. Grenier consider strengthening the rough openings to reduce the potential for vandalism and increase the integrity of the wall.

A brief discussion took place regarding whether the existing stone wall ordinance addressed wall maintenance by private property owners. Ms. Reynolds said it does not but that was something the Commission could look into in the future.

Mr. John Kupa, Mr. Grenier's attorney, noted that homeowners' insurance would cover any repairs to walls in the event of damage or vandalism and said that covenants with the Petitioner's property owners require that the walls be maintained. Mr. Grenier also noted that the ends of the wall openings are not dry but are mortared in. During the discussion, Mr. Grenier said that he will remove an inch-thick layer of concrete left behind on that interior-facing portion of the wall that had been part of a building foundation.

Commissioner Pounder suggested that the property deeds contain a notation of the wall's historic importance and a codicil for their maintenance and protection. Mr. Kupa said he believed similar language was already in place but that was something the Petitioner would be happy to be sure was included.

Further discussion took place relative to the fact that the pillars still existing on the property reflected the magnitude of the former estate, but that they would not be in proportion to the new homes. It was also noted that the work that had been done appears to have stabilized the wall.

Commissioner McQuade made a motion to approve Petition #14-381-1-7, as amended in the September 17, 2014 meeting, to reflect the stone wall endings as they are currently constituted as recommended by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. It was further moved that deeds for subsequent sale of these existing homes shall contain a codicil that says property owners are responsible for the future maintenance of the walls.

Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

Commissioner Pounder requested that Mr. Kupa send the draft language relative to the deed codicils. Mr. Kupa agreed.

Petition #14-292-470
Residential
14 North Fair Street
Pawtuxet Village

The Petition, which had been continued from the December 17, 2014 meeting, was introduced.

Ms. Reynolds stated that she had been in touch with the Petitioner, who had been out of the country but informed Ms. Reynolds that he would plan to attend the meeting. Since the Petitioner was not present, and the Petition had been held for several months since the Petitioner had not appeared, Ms. Reynolds suggested that the item be removed from the docket for now.

Commissioner Leslie made the motion to remove the item from the docket until further notice. Commissioner McQuade seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Petition #14-292-366
Aspray Boat House
Two East View Avenue

Commissioner Tobin introduced the Petition, which was continued from the December 17, 2014 meeting. The Gaspee Days Committee is seeking approval to install a cupola and weathervane atop the Aspray Boathouse, with project funding provided through a Champlin Foundations grant.

Dr. John Concannon, a member of the Gaspee Days Committee and its grants coordinator, was present for the Petition.

He explained to the Commissioners that due to health concerns he had not constructed models of various cupola sizes, as was discussed at the previous meeting, but instead had placed a tape measure along half the length of the boathouse and

took digital images from the north, east, and west view, then constructed a proportional estimation of a 60 x 96" structure; 60 x 60" and 48 x 60".

After some discussion the consensus was that the 60-inch square base would be the best choice. Discussion took place as to the height, appearance and materials for the weathervane, which will be in the shape of a schooner, is the Gaspee Days' emblem, and a reminder of the nautical heritage of Pawtuxet Village. Commissioner Pounder requested that it not be constructed of steel. Dr. Concannon replied that weathervanes are usually copper or aluminum, but that copper would likely be cost-prohibitive and susceptible to theft. It was also discussed whether the Commission would have approval over the final schooner design; Dr. Concannon said he would make sure the design is tasteful and close to renderings that have been submitted to the Commission.

Commissioner Leslie motioned to approve Petition #14-292-366, allowing for the Aspray Boathouse to have a cupola 60 inches wide square and 60 inches high from the ridge of the roof, and to have a weathervane proportionate to the cupola. The cupola will be made of composite material as previously approved for other portions of the project, and with a metal cap. The weathervane of a schooner will be similar in appearance to what has been submitted to the Commission.

Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Following the vote on Petition #14-381-1-7, brief discussion took place about the upcoming Historic Preservation Conference, which will highlight stone walls, on the last Saturday in April. Ms. Reynolds noted that sponsorships were available if any Commissioners were interested in attending.
- Ms. Baker explained that a group had started meeting regarding a memorial in honor of Pvt. Henry Muenzel, who fought in World War I as a member of the 103rd MG Battalion, 26th Division. The memorial is now located on what is believed to be private property, and the owners wish to have it relocated. Interim Chief of Staff and Planning Director William DePasquale requested that a member of the Commission take part in the meetings to offer the Commission's perspective. Commissioner Leslie volunteered.
- Commissioner Tobin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Pounder moved in favor. Commissioner Leslie seconded. All were in favor; none opposed.
- Commissioner Pratt made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner McQuade seconded. All voted in favor; none were opposed. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.