

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

February 3, 2011

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, February 3, 2011, at 4:38 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

Chairperson Philip Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chairperson Philip Donovan, Vice-Chairperson Frederick Richards, and members James McConaha, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, and Steve Shurtleff. [Member Marilyn Fraser arrived later in the meeting]. Absent from the meeting were Commission Members Carol Durgy Brooks, Robert V. Johnson II, and Dr. Bryant Tolles. City Planner Douglas Woodward and Administrative Specialist Donna Muir were also present.

Chairperson Donovan elevated the alternate members to full member status for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the January 6, 2011 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the January 6, 2011, Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Shurtleff to accept the minutes as presented and seconded by Vice Chairperson Richards. Chairperson Donovan asked if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. The motion to accept the minutes of the January 6, 2011, meeting passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

a. *23-25 Green Street.*

Chairperson Donovan updated the Commission members regarding the 23-25 Green Street project. Chairperson Donovan stated that Frank Lemay of Milestone Engineering was hired by Concord Housing & Redevelopment Authority (CHRA) to provide cost estimates of alternatives to the demolition of the entire building. The Planning Board, at their January 19, 2011, meeting, requested CHRA obtain estimates for rehabbing the front portion of the building. Chairperson Donovan introduced John Hoyt, Executive Director of CHRA, and Frank Lemay, President of Milestone Engineering & Construction, Inc. Mr. Lemay reviewed the estimate that his firm provided to CHRA, based on the parameters set by the Concord Heritage Commission and the CHRA. Some of the issues that were looked at included appropriate ADA access to the building, driveway configuration, roofing, lead abatement, and building code requirements for the ceiling height on the second floor. Mr. Lemay computed that the cost to save and rehab the front of the existing building is more than \$83,000 higher, or a 12 percent increase over the cost to demolish the entire building and build anew.

[Ms. Fraser arrived at 4:50 p.m.]

Mr. McConaha asked Mr. Lemay whether building an extended walkway on the side of the building would provide the same ADA accessibility as lowering the building and installing the walkway utilizing the porch. Mr. Lemay stated that an extended walkway along the side of the building would need to be raised because of the grade of the lot. He also thought that building

codes would require this walkway to be covered. Mr. Lemay stated that lowering the building 30” would alleviate the need to install a lift for those with accessibility issues.

Mr. McConaha asked what the rehabbed building would look like at street view and how lowering the building 30” would affect the landscaping. Mr. Lemay said that the trim and siding would be saved, the roofline would remain the same, the windows would be replaced, but the basement windows would no longer exist.

Vice Chair Richards asked if anything on the inside of the building would be saved. Mr. Lemay stated that in order to accommodate office space in what is now residential space, most of the interior features would not be reused.

Mr. Lemay also stated that in rehabbing the building, the balloon framing would need to be reinforced and the first floor windows would need to be dropped and that the window trim would go right up to the ceiling. Ms. Hengen stated that the City’s Code requires a 7 foot ceiling height on the second floor, but that perhaps a waiver could be granted, and if so, would there still be a need for load stabilizing and the changes to the windows? Mr. Lemay replied in the positive.

Mr. McConaha asked Mr. Lemay if an architectural rendering of the proposed building had been completed. Mr. Lemay stated no. Mr. McConaha also asked whether CHRA had made their decision as to rehabbing versus demolition. Mr. Hoyt responded that the Board of CHRA had received the report from Milestone Engineering & Consulting, Inc., but had not made their decision, as they had not met due to the weather. Mr. Hoyt also stated that there are other issues involved which include the need for new site plans and a variance for the driveways that would still need to be considered as part of the project. Mr. Lemay stated that the figures he provided in the estimate are not budget or bid numbers, but are based on other jobs.

Mr. McConaha asked if someone else were to purchase the building and use the first floor for law offices and the second floor as an apartment, would the same type of upgrades be needed. Mr. Woodward said yes if there was a change of use.

Chairperson Donovan thanked Mr. Lemay and Mr. Hoyt for the update to the Heritage Commission, and they left the meeting.

Chairperson Donovan stated that there would probably be a meeting with Mr. Woodward, Mr. Hoyt, Mr. Lemay, and himself prior to the Planning Board meeting of February 16, 2011. He suggested that the members of the Heritage Commission share their opinions regarding the report and information presented by Mr. Lemay and Mr. Hoyt.

Mr. McConaha thinks that the Planning Board would be interested in knowing what the Heritage Commission wants with respect to this and other properties. He also stated that he doesn’t think the rehab plans do much of anything for the building. Ms. Fraser stated that the location must be important to CHRA. Her concern was whether people walking by would recognize the building as the same one or would it stand out as a new building.

Vice Chair Richards asked how much of this compromise rehab meets the Heritage Commission’s goals. He also stated that all the history of the inside space will be totally lost. Ms. Hengen stated that from the perspective of the Heritage Commission and the Demolition Review Committee, it is the streetscape that is within their purview. She doesn’t think that even with the building being demolished that the view from the street would be changed. Mr. McConaha agrees with Ms.

Hengen in that the exterior will have the same molding, doors, trim, and siding and therefore would look the same.

Vice Chair Richards said that the compromise doesn't do much for him. He feels that everything could be replicated to look exactly as it is now instead of reusing the various items. He said that he would still like to see CHRA look for another building and preserve the Green Street building.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the building would look exactly the same on the front and sides of the building. Ms. Hengen stated that the Upton law firm building on Center Street looks identical from the streetscape; however, the inside and the addition is totally new and looks like a modern law office.

Chairperson Donovan stated that there were a couple of things driving the proposal: first, the cost of the changes has to do with the limitations of the site, and second, the requirements which are limited and/or driven by Code. He also reminded the Heritage Commission members that this proposal is only a draft and that what the Commission set out to do was to keep the façade of the building the same, maintaining the historic streetscape. Ms. Hengen agreed and said that the report is the worst case scenario.

Mr. McConaha asked why people couldn't be made to walk around the building. He feels that lowering the building will kill the trees and change the street view. He suggested that the secure lobby and client areas be located in the back of the building. Mr. McConaha isn't concerned about the interior of the building, but would like to see a rendering of the outside. Chairperson Donovan stated that if the building was kept at the existing level, it causes the basement area to become space that can be occupied, which in turn causes other requirements for parking. Mr. Woodward stated that it is important that people enter the building in the front because of grading issues, which would otherwise require the use of lifts and which would add to the costs of the project. He believes that the site itself is half of the issue; it is a tough site to work with.

Ms. Hengen feels that Mr. Lemay presented a good report.

Chairperson Donovan agreed and stated that the Heritage Commission has not heard from CHRA as to what they are thinking. He said that the CHRA met the Planning Board requirements with the process they went through. Mr. Woodward said that CHRA was meeting next week and would provide a formal statement of their position. Chairperson Donovan stated that there are some intangibles that can't be assigned a monetary figure, such as public relations with the community who support saving the building. Mr. Shurtleff stated that it was helpful at the Planning Board meeting for Heritage Commission members to be in attendance.

Chairperson Donovan stated that he sent a letter to HUD asking whether federal funds were being used for the Green Street project, which would trigger a state Section 106 review. Mr. Woodward said that he had a conversation with HUD last week and that HUD would have a definitive response prior to the Planning Board meeting scheduled for February 16, 2011. Chairperson Donovan said that he would keep the Heritage Commission apprised.

b. *Concord Municipal Airport Determination of Eligibility Report.*

Ms. Hengen stated that she was retained by the City of Concord to prepare a Determination of Eligibility Report on the Concord Municipal Airport. Although the City is not doing anything immediately with the building, the work to be done in the future triggered a Section 106 review by

the State of New Hampshire. Ms. Fraser said that she had served on various airport committees and enjoyed reading the report.

Ms. Hengen stated that Hangar 2 at the Concord Municipal Airport is the oldest in the state. The Concord Airport began as a private enterprise but the City of Concord purchased it because of available federal funding.

Vice Chair Richards asked the age of the oldest hangar, to which Ms. Hengen replied it was built in 1929. She stated that it is the building with the arched roof and can be seen from Airport Road. Ms. Hengen stated that the terminal was built in 1937.

[Vice Chair Richards left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.]

Mr. Shurtleff said that the City of Concord is looking to do some work on the main terminal in the future. Ms. Hengen stated that her report can be helpful as a planning document for future work on at the airport. She also stated that Concord was the first place in the country to use airport zoning.

Chairperson Donovan thanked Ms. Hengen for her report.

- c. *Further consideration of an amendment to Section B-5, Voting, of the Heritage Commission's procedural rules relative to adding a requirement for members to meet a juror standard or to otherwise disqualify themselves from participation in any decision making when reviewing applications in the Historic District and applications for Demolition Delay.*

Chairperson Donovan stated that because Mr. Johnson was not in attendance, he would like to hold off on the final vote until next month. Mr. McConaha feels that in light of the City Solicitor's memorandum, that there is no further discussion needed. Mr. Woodward said that he did not have copies of the amendment as revised by the Solicitor, but will provide copies for the Commission at the March meeting.

Chairperson Donovan stated that this item would remain on the table.

- d. *Update on the Technical Assistance Grant to the City from EPA to facilitate Sustainable Redevelopment of historic properties in Downtown Concord.*

Chairperson Donovan asked Mr. Woodward to update the Commission regarding the Technical Assistance grant to the City from EPA. Mr. Woodward said that the process would go on longer than originally planned, and the EPA would probably complete the program by July. He stated that there had not been any further conference calls. Mr. Woodward stated that he would keep the Heritage Commission informed.

- d. *Site Plan Review.*

Chairperson Donovan stated that Vice Chair Richards was taking the lead on this project for the Heritage Commission and had informed him that he had looked at some models that the Preservation Alliance has. Mr. Woodward stated that the Planning Board would be meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, to begin the review of the Site Plan Regulations. He also said that Mr. Lemay, owner of Milestone Engineering, thought it would be good to have a way to identify specific buildings of historic interest in advance of someone making a decision to purchase such a property with demolition in mind. Mr. Woodward said that thought that it valuable for developers

to know what buildings were historically significant. Mr. Woodward said he would be contacting various planning board associations to see if their regulations address historic buildings. Ms. Hengen said that currently the tools available for developers are the defined historic districts and neighborhood districts. Mr. Woodward suggested that the Site Plan Regulations are citywide, whereas the neighborhood district program is specific to a neighborhood. Mr. McConaha stated that he would like the site plan application to reflect whether the existing structure has historic value, similar to the requirements of the Division of Historic Resources. He feels the developers would be aware from the beginning of the historical significance of the property. Mr. Woodward stated that the new Subdivision Regulations adopted January 2011, specify that historic properties need to be identified on the application. He stated that the more historic surveys/inventories that are done, the better to provide a source of information to the public. Ms. Hengen stated that the central repository for the surveys and inventories is the State of NH Division of Historic Resources.

e. Heritage Sign Program.

Chairperson Donovan said that he had received an email from Ms. Brooks stating that the Heritage Sign Program Workshop which was held on January 26, 2011, was very successful and that Ms. Brooks and Ms. Hengen were planning on offering the workshop again.

[Ms. Hengen left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.]

f. DHR Project Review.

Mr. McConaha commented that the Division of Historic Resources does not provide enough information when submitting their Request for Project Review forms for the Heritage Commission to review and comment appropriately. He drafted a letter for the Chairperson's signature stating that additional information regarding each review would be helpful. Chairperson Donovan stated that he would review the letter.

g. Application for Appointment to the Heritage Commission.

Mr. Woodward stated that he received a letter and resume from Ms. Denise Pearl who is interested in becoming a member of the Heritage Commission. Chairperson Donovan volunteered to follow up with Ms. Pearl.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Shurtleff and seconded by Ms. Fraser to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist