

HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
October 5th, 2023

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting at Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, October 5th, 2023.

Attendees: Chairman Richard Jaques, Vice-Chair Jim Spain, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Members Dr. Bryant Tolles Jr., Mike Dunn and Carol Durgy Brooks, and Alternate Althea Barton

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner
Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II
Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager – Development
Tim Thompson, Assistant Community Development Director

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jaques at 4:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Spain made a motion to approve the minutes from September 7th, 2023, Ms. Brooks seconded; all in favor, motion carried.

3. New Business

Mark Ciborowski presenting an RSA 79-E request regarding demolition of the E&P hotel building along with concept plans for the Phoenix Block

Mark Ciborowski, Anthony Mento from SMP Architecture, and Scott Newman from 106 Associates presented the application.

Mr. Ciborowski introduced Mr. Mento, and Mr. Newman to the Commission. Mr. Ciborowski explained Mr. Newman from 106 Associates prepared the historic inventory report, which is required by the statute to review the historical aspects of the building. The building at this time is a contributing building in the district.

Members noted that they could not access the links in the agenda to the report or other supporting documents.

Mr. Newman projected the report on the screen and gave a presentation. Mr. Newman explained the history of the building. Mr. Newman noted the building is listed as part of the downtown Concord historic district. The historic value of the building has been marginalized due to the removal of most of the original character defining features. The metal sign dating to the early 1900's is worth retaining and incorporating into the new construction on the site. The space above the CVS next door to the right of 54\56 S. Main St would be considered a hole in the street scape. The loss of the continuity of the street scape has degraded the historic value of that area. Raising the height of the location of the CVS building with new construction would increase density and economic activity in this part of downtown. Which, Mr. Newman feels would enhance the sustainability of Concord historic street scape as a whole.

Mr. Ciborowski explained they have not filled out the application(s) for the RSA 79E tax relief incentive yet. Mr. Ciborowski advised today they are looking for feedback from the Heritage Commission that the benefits of the project far out way the marginal loss of the existing building at 54\56 S. Main St, Concord.

Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager – Community Development noted that Mr. Ciborowski met with the Heritage Commission a year ago to discuss the historic concerns for the redevelopment of Phenix Hall. Mr. Walsh explained that Mr. Ciborowski will apply to City Council for RSA 79E in near

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future. As part of the application Mr. Ciborowski is proposing a replacement of a qualifying structure. Mr. Ciborowski will preserve Phenix Hall. Mr. Ciborowski will demolish the E&P Hotel and the CVS buildings. As part of application for RSA 79E, which is a tax relief incentive, where by it freezes the value of the property, CVS and Phenix Hall properties more or less today and will not have to pay tax on the increased value of the properties when redevelopment is completed. The tax savings is a subsidy to Mr. Ciborowski for the development cost to help take on the debt to build this project in order to help make economically viable. The Heritage Commission needs to decide that the properties being demolished in the project do not have any significant historical, cultural or architectural value. The replacement building achieves public benefits to a degree which is greater than if the existing buildings were preserved and renovated.

Ms. Barton asked numerous questions of the consultant and staff.

Ms. Brooks suggested for the sake of discussion while the architect is there to continue the conversation. However, Ms. Brooks explained she will not be making any determination this evening until she has a chance to review the documents for this project.

Ms. Kretovic suggested to postpone this item and reconvene a week or two from now. Then, come back to decide after reviewing the documents.

Mr. Jaques asked the Commission to decide on when the special meeting to continue this discussion will occur. Mr. Jaques advised two weeks maximum for special meeting. Ms. Kretovic suggested Thursday October 19th, 2023 at 4:30 pm. Time of the meeting will be no more than 45 minutes. The meeting is to be located in Council Chambers and will be noticed for the public.

Mr. Walsh advised the Commission that staff will provide a very brief memo on what is expected of the Heritage Commission. Staff will also provide a copy of the 1999 historic inventory of CVS building provided by another consultant, and a copy of the 1997 master plan, which also discusses the properties.

Councilor Kretovic left the meeting at 6:08 p.m. Mr. Spain made a motion for Ms. Barton to be seated. Ms. Brooks seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Demolition Review Committee – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain reported that there was one property for review at 131 West Parrish Rd. Two years ago, this property was approved to be demolished. Due to Covid the owner did not have the building demolished. The owner of the property is now looking to move forward. Mr. Spain went to the property and spoke with owner. They just wanted to make sure the permission still exists to demolish. Mr. Spain explained the demolition was approved twice and still approved.

Ms. Barton asked for an update on the CSX train tower from Mr. Spain.

Mr. Spain explained there was a well-attended meeting to discuss the demolition of the CSX train tower. The train tower building was not approved by the Demolition Review Committee for demolition. The building is located near the bridge on Water St. Since then, many people that attended the meeting gathered to mount effort to explore options for preservation. Mr. Spain informed the Commission he had asked for Ms. Barton to investigate and speak with CSX. Mr. Spain asked for Ms. Barton to discuss her findings.

Ms. Barton advised that a group is working with CSX to preserve the tower. They suggested to move the tower to a different location to preserve. However, this could be difficult as there would be some of the building that would be left behind. Also, another issue is finding a property to relocate the tower. They asked CSX for twelve months to find a solution. CSX employee advised that the head office would make the decision on the tower.

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Ms. Barton read email she sent to Vice-Chair Spain asking about next steps and what the Commission can do to follow up with preservation of the building.

Mr. Spain stated that he does not approve of the demolition of the tower.

Mr. Jaques explained there is nothing else for the Heritage Commission to do. Mr. Jaques explained CSX is located in Florida. Mr. Jaques explained if they post a meeting he does not feel CSX would attend.

Mr. Spain explained he is not opposed to writing a letter to CSX to discuss saving the tower and getting an update.

Ms. Brooks suggested to Mr. Spain to look at minutes from the public hearing. Ms. Brooks suggested that the letter to CSX provide suggestions and alternatives to demolition provided by the public at the public hearing, since CSX did not attend the hearing.

Mr. Spain explained the minutes are posted on the City website.

Mr. Spain made a motion for a follow up letter to be sent to CSX railroad. In the letter they will attach the Demolition Review meeting minutes and would like to follow up on the current status of pending demolition of the train tower. Mr. Jaques seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. Ms. Brooks abstained from the vote.

5. Heritage Sign Program – Carol Brooks – There are no new inquiries.

6. Planning Board Update – Heather Shank

- a) St. Paul's School granite posts – Ms. Shank was at pre-construction meeting for St Paul's School and asked about the granite posts. They advised they will save the post and look for a new location on the campus to re-use.

Dr. Bryant Tolles Jr. left meeting at 6:49 p.m.

- b) Abbott/Sewalls Falls barn – Ms. Shank shared that someone asked about using the existing barn at the Abbott Road subdivision for a residence. If they decide to move forward they will need to go to ZBA for variances because of the encroachments in the setbacks.

7. Council Update – Councilor Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic was not present for an update.

8. Old Business

- a. Magnificent Ten – Program Name: Honoring Architectural – Historic Buildings

Mr. Jaques advised that the Commission move on the Phoenix Hall decision before following up on this.

- b. Gas Holder Building – Ms. Barton reported that there is no update except for the tower.
- c. Website – Councilor Kretovic & Mike Dunn – Mr. Dunn reported that there is no update.
- d. Monuments & Granite Markers – Mr. Spain reported that there is no update.

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- e. Norris Mansion – Mr. Jaques reported that there is no update. Mr. Spain advised they are going to meet with Mr. Duprey to get the contact information for the lot on Main St where Friendly's used to be located.

9. Any other business to come before the Commission

- a. Correspondence - Ms. Shank reported that there is no correspondence.
- b. Ms. Brooks would like for members to inform Ms. Shank at Planning what documents they are\are not able to receive. Ms. Brooks prefers for all documents to be sent as soon as possible to all members. Ms. Brooks asked before there is any other public meeting that they are prepared to look at the materials. Ms. Brooks requests for the City of Concord to front cost for any large packets to be mailed or picked up at the City of Concord Planning office.
- c. Attendance
Mr. Spain and Ms. Barton plan to attend next month's meeting.

10. Adjournment

With no other business to address, Chairman Jaques. motioned, seconded by Ms. Brooks, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously at 7:03 p.m.

A Special Meeting to discuss the 79-E request will occur Thursday, October 19th, 2023. The next regular monthly meeting will be held on November 2nd at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Krista Tremblay
Administrative Specialist II