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## City of Newton, Massachusetts

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### Department of Planning and Development

Barney S. Heath

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Director

**Date:** February 22, 2024

**Place/Time:** Zoom, at 7:00 PM

**Attending:**

Doug Cornelius, Chair	Mark Armstrong, Member
Katie Kubie, Member	John Rice, Member
Harvey Schorr, Member	Anne Marie Stein, Member
David Lewis, Staff	

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. with Doug Cornelius serving as Chair. Voting permanent members were John Rice, Harvey Schorr, Mark Armstrong, Katie Kubie, and Anne Marie Stein. David Lewis acted as Zoom host and the meeting was digitally recorded on the Zoom device.

### 1. 145 Auburndale Avenue – Violation of Demolition Delay

#### Violation of Demolition Delay Ordinance

Staff Reported that in September 2023, NHC staff administratively approved a Historical Review Application at this address, which proposed the demolition of a small vestibule addition at the rear of the house. During that application, staff deemed the property to be Historically Significant. Also in September, staff approved a Building Permit, which called for the repair of siding and replacement of windows. On February 2nd, 2024, ISD staff brought to the attention of NHC staff that work had been done which exceeded the scope of work approved by NHC staff. The unapproved alterations included the removal of all siding and the demolition of the front porch.

Kristen Annunziato, from the City of Newton Law Department, was present to explain the violation process. Ms. Annunziato explained that the property has already been found in violation, and that a notice of violation has been issued by ISD. She continued to explain that NHC will be voting to

authorize staff to negotiate a settlement agreement with the owners, and that the settlement agreement would need to be authorized by an additional vote at the next meeting.

Arthur Arbetter and David Boronkay were present to represent the property. Mr. Cornelius asked Mr. Arbetter and Mr. Boronkay to confirm that they understood the violation process. Mr. Arbetter and Mr. Boronkay confirmed as such. Mr. Boronkay spoke to clarify what had taken place with the project.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to authorize staff to negotiate a settlement with the applicant. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to authorize staff to negotiate a settlement agreement for the violation of demolition delay at 145 Auburndale Avenue.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		
KK		
HS		
DC		

## **2. 99 Crescent Street – Request for Demolition**

Request for partial demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this is a late 19th century Queen Anne style home. Staff welcomes discussion of the proposed addition.

Alberto Medina and Charles Chaves were present to represent the application. They used the share screen function to present the updated plans. They began their presentation by displaying photos of the neighborhood and the existing house, before displaying their updated plans and explaining the changes they made between their original and updated design. Mr. Medina also clarified which portions of the original home would remain as part of the partial demolition.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought the design was an improvement from the original design. Ms. Kubie inquired if the original porch and entryway would remain, and commented that she would prefer if the original porch remained. Mr. Medina confirmed that the porch and entryway would be removed. Mr. Schorr asked a question about the roof line. Mr. Medina explained why the roof was designed the way it was. Mr. Armstrong suggests changing the roof in the rear, and comments that he likes the front roof. Ms. Stein asked if the additions on the side of the house were set back from the central block. Mr. Medina confirmed that they were. Mr. Schorr suggests carrying across the roof line at the garage. Mr. Armstrong comments that he would approve the design.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Dani Chamberland, a rear abutter commented on the impact of historic trees surrounding the property. Mr. Medina comments that they have been in contact with a tree service, and they believe they will be able to keep two trees. Mr. Cornelius explained that trees are outside of the scope of the NHC. Colin O'Connell, a rear abutter as well, commented that he thought the updated plan was better for the neighborhood than the previous one.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 4-2:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		
	KK	
HS		
	DC	

### 3. 77 Halcyon Road – Request for Demolition

Request for partial demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this 1926 vernacular home is located in an inventoried subdivision. Staff welcomes discussion of the proposed addition.

Nick Landry was present to represent the application. He gave a presentation using the share screen function. Mr. Landry began the presentation by showing a site plan, before showing renderings of the proposed design. He continued by explaining the changes made to the design since the previous meeting, and described the materials intended to be used.

Mr. Armstrong commented that he had concerns about the scale of certain windows, but overall he approves of the design. Mr. Schorr asked for clarification on Mr. Armstrong's question. Mr. Armstrong explained his critique of the windows, but commented that he would approve of the design as proposed.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Carri Kramer, a resident of 82 Athelstane Road, asks why there is no discussion of the stop work order placed on the property in 2023, and brought up concerns about how previous work was conducted at this site. Mr. Cornelius commented to clarify the scope of the commission. Mr. Landry commented that he would bring Ms. Kramer's concerns up to the property owner.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		
KK		
HS		
DC		

#### 4. 28 Cottonwood Road – Request for Demolition

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this 1958 modern style home is well preserved and located next to two extant homes built in a similar style. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Jeffrey Baker, the property owner, is present to represent the application. Mr. Baker comments that he and his family have lived in the neighborhood for over 30 years, and that they have seen the neighborhood change in that time, which is why they are looking to demolish the home.

Mr. Cornelius comments that there does seem to be transition in the neighborhood. Ms. Stein comments that the neighborhood has transitioned from fairly modest houses to rather large houses, and asks Mr. Baker if he intends to stay in the new home. Mr. Baker clarifies that he is unsure at this time. Mr. Cornelius comments that as houses are torn down in subdivisions like this, the neighborhood context is lost. Ms. Stein comments that there is more effort to preserve mid-century homes on the west coast, and there is less of that effort around here. Ms. Kubie comments that there are stricter guidelines for demolition on the west coast, which are often linked to environmental concerns.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Barbara Miller, a neighbor at 34 Cottonwood Road, comments that she supports the demolition of the house.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Kubie seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 4-2:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
	MA	
KK		

<b>HS</b>		
	<b>DC</b>	

## 5. 165 Evelyn Road– Request for Demolition

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this 1952 split-level ranch is part of a well-preserved neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Yun Chang was present to represent the application. Mr. Chang described the property, and says that the house does not have value to him, and a renovation would not be worth it.

Mr. Cornelius comments that there is not a lot of transition yet in Evelyn Road, and that a lot of the original subdivision remains. Mr. Rice comments that he agrees with Mr. Cornelius. Ms. Stein comments on new construction in the streets around Evelyn Road. Mr. Cornelius comments that he believed that many of the houses that were torn down in this area were preferably preserved.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Eddie Tang, an abutter on Mary Ellen Road asked for clarification on the scope of the review in the meeting. Ms. Stein asked Mr. Change for clarification on his project timeline. Mr. Chang explained he hoped to demolish the property as soon as possible. Carol Wein, an abutter at 70 Mary Ellen, commented that the neighborhood has transitioned a bit, but comments that she does not approve of many of the designs that have been built recently.

Mr. Rice made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Kubie seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

<b>Voting in the Affirmative</b>	<b>Voting in the Negative</b>	<b>Recusal/Abstain</b>
<b>JR</b>		
<b>AMS</b>		
	<b>MA</b>	
<b>KK</b>		
<b>HS</b>		
<b>DC</b>		

## 6. 25 Shute Path – Request for Demolition

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this is a typical example of a ranch in Oak Hill Park. Staff welcomes discussion of its historical significance.

Adam and Sarah Vasserman were present to represent the application. The applicants gave a presentation using the share screen function. They began their presentation by describing the

neighborhood and showing photographs of the houses around theirs, before describing the issues with the existing home and reasons for wanting to construct a new house.

Mr. Cornelius commented that there were four original homes and five new builds on the street. Ms. Kubie asked if there was any way to document the history of Oak Hill Park before all the homes have been lost. Staff commented that the city did publish a walking tour pamphlet of the neighborhood in 2002, but that many of the homes referenced in that guide have since been torn down. Ms. Stein comments that she is working on a project to document the remaining original homes. Mr. Cornelius comments that there is information online about the neighborhood.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Cornelius proposes having a discussion about the preservation of Oak Hill Park at the commission's March meeting.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-6:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
	JR	
	AMS	
	MA	
	KK	
	HS	
	DC	

## **7. 236 Islington Road – Local Landmark Review**

Local Landmark Review.

Staff Reported that this is a landmarked ca. 1870 Second Empire style house. The applicant is seeking an in-kind replacement of a rubber roof.

Todd Mellor was present to represent the application. Mr. Mellor explained the history of the project and explained that they were intending to do an in-kind replacement for the section of the roof.

Mr. Rice commented that roof replacements are important due to increased frequency of storms. Mr. Cornelius clarified that any alterations to a landmarked property need to be approved by the commission.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to grant a certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the roof replacement.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		
KK		
HS		
DC		

## 8. 1615 Beacon Street – Local Landmark Review

### Local Landmark Review

Staff Reported that this is a landmarked ca. 1750 farmhouse with several additions. The applicant is seeking to build an addition to the rear of the building.

Laurance Lee was present to represent the application. John LaFreniere was also present, and gave a presentation using the share screen function. Mr. LaFreniere began by describing the history of the property, before showing a site plan and the proposed addition plans. He continued by describing the proposed materials for the addition, and displaying 3D renderings of the proposed addition.

Mr. Cornelius comments that the applicants have been great stewards of the building and that he likes the design. Mr. Rice comments that he was the petitioner to landmark the property when he served on City Council, and that he supports the work. Mr. Schorr comments that he thinks it is a very nice project, and thinks they did a great job. Ms. Kubie and Ms. Stein comment that they agree as well.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Rice made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the addition.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		
KK		
HS		
DC		

## 9. 83-85 Faxon Street – Request for Demolition

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this is a ca 1886 vernacular Colonial Revival in a well-preserved neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Trevor O’Leary was present to represent the application. He gave a presentation using the share screen function. Mr. O’Leary began by providing a history of the property and describing the existing house. He continued by showing photographs of the house and the state of the interior, as well as photographs of the neighborhood.

Mr. Cornelius comments that the age of the house is eye-catching. Ms. Stein asked when the porch was removed. Mr. O’Leary commented that he was unsure when the porch was removed by the previous owner.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Terry Sauro, resident of Cook Street, commented that the house should be demolished due to rodent issues at the property. Alan Qiu, also a resident of Cook Street, commented that the house is an eyesore for the neighborhood and is falling apart. Phyllis, another resident of Faxon Street, commented that the condition of the house is in bad shape, but that there have been other teardowns in the neighborhood, and it is sad to see the change in the neighborhood.

Mr. Armstong made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Rice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 1-5:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR	AMS	
	MA	
	KK	
	HS	
	DC	

## 10. 335 River Street – Request for Demolition

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this is a ca 1870 Colonial Revival style house in a relatively well-preserved neighborhood. Staff welcomes discussion of its historical significance.

Alec Polnarev was present to represent the application. He gave a presentation using share screen, beginning with a history of the property. Mr. Polnarev then showed photographs of the neighborhood.



Mr. Cornelius commented that he was surprised to see that the house was constructed in 1870. Mr. Armstrong asked for clarification on the zoning. Mr. Polnarev says that he will likely be applying for a special permit.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Stein commented that it's hard to tell that the house was constructed in the nineteenth century due to alterations made to the home. Mr. Cornelius comments that it looks closer to a 1940s home.

Ms. Stein made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Kubie seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-5:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
	JR	
	AMS	
	MA	
	KK	
	HS	
		DC Abs

#### **11. 53 White Avenue – Request for Demolition**

Request for total demolition of house.

Staff Reported that this ca. 1900 home appears to have been heavily altered. Staff welcomes discussion of its historical significance.

Laurance Lee was present to represent the application. Mr. Lee gives a presentation using the share screen function, beginning by showing an aerial view of the property and a site plan, before displaying photographs of the house and garage and describing the lot.

Mr. Cornelius commented that the neighborhood does not have much context. Ms. Stein commented that recent builds have changed the scale and context of the neighborhood. Mr. Armstrong asks for clarification about the location of the driveway. Mr. Lee explains that there is a driveway on White Avenue and a driveway on Bow Road.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Sandra Shapiro, an abutter at 41 White Avenue, voiced concerns about a large new house in the neighborhood. Liz Scott, another abutter on White Avenue, commented that the current property does not have any aesthetic value and that she would be happy to see a different house on the lot.

Mr. Schorr made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 3-3:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
MA		
	KK	
HS		
	DC	
	AMS	

The motion did not pass, and the property was not found to be preferably preserved. Demolition Delay is not imposed.

## 12. 81-83 Athelstane Road – Request for Waiver

Request for waiver of demolition delay.

Staff Reported that this home was constructed in 1928 in a mix of Colonial Revival and Greek Revival Styles. The home is located in the Locksley Park Residential District. The house was found preferably preserved at our October 11th meeting.

Reid Diamond was present to represent the application. Mr. Diamond gave a presentation using the share screen function, beginning by showing photographs of the existing house before showing renderings of the proposed design for new construction.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he liked the new design. Mr. Armstrong commented that he approved of the design as well. Ms. Stein asked for clarification on outdoor space. Mr. Armstrong asked for clarification on the siding used. Mr. Diamond said that the proposed siding is representative of the original siding on the house.

Mr. Cornelius opened the meeting for public comment. Susan McDonald, a resident of 50 Rowena Road, gave a presentation using the share screen feature, showing houses that were renovated instead of demolition, photographs of open space in the neighborhood, and photos of existing houses. Ms. McDonald asked for clarification about the certain aspects of the site plan, and Mr. Diamond responded. Marsha, another resident, commented that houses that have been demolished on the street have been replaced by much larger homes.

Ms. Stein made a motion to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 22, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demolition delay and approve the plans as proposed.

Voting in the Affirmative	Voting in the Negative	Recusal/Abstain
JR		
AMS		
MA		

KK		
HS		
DC		

### **13. 23 Sylvester Road – Request for Waiver**

Request for waiver of demolition delay.

Staff Reported that this is a small, Cape style home in a brick construction that is characteristic of the other immediate neighbors on the street. The house was found preferably preserved at our August 30th meeting.

Michael Quinn was present to represent the application. Mr. Quinn explained that his architect was unable to attend, and he would like to push the item to the next meeting. The commission agreed to hear the item at the next meeting.

### **Administrative Items**

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes for the January 25<sup>th</sup> and January 29<sup>th</sup> Newton Historical Commission meetings were unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Respectfully,

, NHC