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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: June 27th, 2024

Place/Time: Zoom, at 7:00 PM

Attending:	Doug Cornelius, Chair	John Rice, Vice Chair
	Mark Armstrong, Member	Harvey Schorr, Member
	Nancy Grissom, Member	Anne Marie Stein, Member
	Scott Friedman, Alternate	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, Mark Armstrong, Harvey Schorr, Nancy Grissom, and Anne Marie Stein. Alternate member Scott Friedman was designated to vote as not all voting members were present. David Lewis acted as Zoom host and the meeting was digitally recorded on the Zoom device.

1. 1299 Centre Street (First Baptist Church) – Preservation Restriction Review

Request for Review of Proposed Work to Property with Preservation Restriction

Staff Reported that this is a ca. 1888 Richardsonian Romanesque church building. The applicant seeks to repair the building's bell tower.

Jana Yeaton and Scott Aquilina were present to represent the application. Mr. Aquilina gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing images of the church and surrounding neighborhood while Ms. Yeaton described the history of the church and the project. Mr. Aquilina then described the architecture of the building and the existing conditions of the tower in greater detail, before showing plans of the proposed work on the tower.

Mr. Cornelius commented that the building is beautiful, and asked the fellow commissioners if they would be willing to offer a letter of support for the project. All commission members commented that they would do so. Ms. Stein commented that the presentation that was given was very good. Mr. Armstrong complimented the architectural drawings submitted.

Enrique suggested that the church create a documentary of the reconstruction.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to authorize Mr. Cornelius to write a letter of support for the project. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to authorize Mr. Cornelius to write a letter of support for the project.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR		
AMS		
SF		
MA		
NG		
HS		
DC		

2. 19 Highland Avenue (The Swedenborgian Church) – Request for Landmark Review

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a ca. 1893 Gothic style church. The applicant seeks to renovate the church building and demolish the parish house for a residential development.

Stephen Buchbinder, Bruce Wheeler, Donald Lang, Tony Hsiao, Ozge Diler Himes, and Kathy Winters were present to represent the application. Mr. Hsiao gave a presentation using the share screen function. Mr. Cornelius clarified that the plans were preliminary, and that the commission would not vote on the project during the meeting. Mr. Buchbinder described the project as Mr. Hsiao displayed the plans and photos of the site and existing buildings. Mr. Lang then discussed the plans as they related to the Local Landmark report for the building. Mr. Hsiao then showed additional pictures of the site, before presenting plans for the alteration and rehabilitation of the existing church building. Mr. Buchbinder summarized the presentation at the end.

Mr. Schorr commented that he was supportive of the idea, but added that he had concerns about the shed dormers, specifically their size and alignment over the other openings. Mr. Hsiao commented that they are hoping to bring in additional natural light, and that they can revisit the design of the dormers. Ms. Grissom commented that she looked forward to seeing what would replace the parish house. Mr. Cornelius commented that he thought the concept of adding dormers to the roof was good, but was curious to see what they would look like in detail on finalized plans. Mr. Armstrong commented that he thought the design was compatible with the existing church. Mr. Rice commented that he was happy that the stained-glass windows would be preserved. Ms. Grissom asked a clarifying question about the exterior entrances. Mr. Hsiao explained the location of the entrances to the building. Ms. Grissom asked where parking would be located. Mr. Hsiao commented that the team was exploring an underground garage under the proposed new building.

Councilor Albright commented that she was excited about the project and how it will contribute to the overall Newtonville neighborhood. Gail Deegan commented that she was excited about the project and how it would add to the vitality of the neighborhood.

Mr. Buchbinder commented that they would be back with updated plans at a future meeting.

3. 371 Cherry Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this ca. 1870 Second-Empire home fits in well with the age and style of the neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Owen Chen and Charles Navratil were present to represent the application. The applicants showed photos of the existing house using the share screen function and described the conditions of the existing house.

Mr. Cornelius commented that the home was old enough to bring to the meeting, but he was unsure about the remaining historic fabric. Mr. Friedman agreed, and commented that the mansard roof is the best remaining architectural detail. Mr. Navratil commented that plans for partial demolition could be limited by zoning. Mr. Schorr commented that the rear of the building was not in great shape but that the front façade was, and recommended a partial demolition. Ms. Stein commented that the form of the front was the best part of the existing structure.

There was no public comment.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 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:	Recused/Abstained:
JR	AMS	
HS	SF	
NG	DC	

The property was not found preferably preserved and demolition was not delayed.

4. 21 Larkin Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Partial Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a ca. 1930 home that was initially constructed as a garage. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved, and welcomes discussion of the proposed addition.

Greg Antonioli was present to represent the application. Mr. Cornelius explained the process of a partial demolition vote. Mr. Antonioli showed photos of the house using the share screen function, and described the existing home and the plans for partial demolition.

Mr. Friedman made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 3-4:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
AMS	JR	
MA	NG	
HS	SF	
	DC	

The property was not found preferably preserved and demolition was not delayed.

5. 124 Neshobe Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that staff welcomes discussion of the historical significance of this 1953 Garrison Colonial located in Waban Village.

John and Shana Maldonado were present to represent the application. They gave a presentation using the share screen function, beginning by showing a picture of the house and map of the neighborhood, before discussing their reasoning for wanting to demolish the home.

Mr. Cornelius commented that the neighborhood was historic, but that he was not sure about this house specifically. Mr. Friedman and Ms. Stein commented that they agreed. Ms. Grissom commented that the neighborhood retained a context of scale.

Linda and Harvey Segal, residents of 92 Varick Road, commented that they appreciated what the commission had previously approved at 100 Varick Road, as it retained some details of the neighborhood. Ms. Segal also commented that the neighborhood had mixed context.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-5-1

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
	JR	HS abstained
	AMS	
	NG	
	SF	
	DC	

6. 50 Pratt Drive – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a 1953 ranch in an inventoried subdivision. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Laurance Lee was present to represent the application. Mr. Lee gave a presentation using the share screen function. Mr. Lee displayed a map of the neighborhood, before displaying a photograph of the house, as well as a house nearby that was previously found not preferably preserved.

Ms. Grissom commented that she believed that the commission had found houses in this neighborhood preferably preserved before. Ms. Stein commented that she believed the neighborhood retained some historic context.

Alice and Nicky, residents of 77 Morrill Street, commented that they have lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years, and that most of the homes in the neighborhood are one-story. They commented that they had concerns about privacy if larger homes were built in the neighborhood. Seth Goodman, a resident of 43 Pratt Drive, commented that he lived in the neighborhood since 2016, and that this is one of the few remaining neighborhoods in Newton that is affordable to people, and that if more of the original ranches were demolished the neighborhood may lose that affordability. He also commented that new construction may not be in the character of the other homes in the neighborhood. Ellen O’Brien, a resident of 44 Pratt Drive commented that the character of the neighborhood is changing, and expressed concerns about privacy as well as a loss of sunlight. Councilor Malakie commented that the neighborhood is mostly still in-tact, and that the houses fit in with the neighborhood. She encouraged that the commission find the property preferably preserved.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR		
AMS		
MA		
HS		
NG		
SF		
DC		

7. 411 Dudley Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that staff welcomes discussion of the significance of this 1950 ranch style home.

Adam Gluzman was present to represent the application. Mr. Gluzman read a statement from the homeowners, outlining their reasoning for wanting to demolish the home.

Mr. Cornelius commented that 454 Dudley Road was preferably preserved at the previous meeting. Ms. Stein commented that this house sits beautifully on the property, and that it fits the site well.

Steve Vondran, a resident of 376 Dudley Road, commented that there are many newly constructed houses on the road, and that he would encourage new construction on this site.

Commission Comment

Mr. Friedman made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0-1

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR		SF abstain
AMS		
MA		
HS		
NG		
DC		

8. 262 River Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that staff welcomes discussion of the historical significance of this altered ca. 1860 Cape style house.

Mengting Torosian was present to represent the application. Ms. Torosian gave a presentation using the share screen function. Ms. Torosian showed photos of the existing home and described the property.

Mr. Cornelius commented that the date of construction led in part to the finding of historical significance. Ms. Grissom commented that she previously lived nearby, and explained that this was originally a community of worker housing for the Waltham watch factory.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 2-4-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
MA	JR	HS abstained
NG	AMS	
	SF	
	DC	

The property was found not preferably preserved, and demolition was not delayed.

9. 82-84 East Side Parkway – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition of House and Garage

Staff Reported that this is a 1925 Colonial Revival in an inventoried neighborhood with mixed historic context. Staff welcomes discussion of its historical significance.

Omar Youssef and Niko Giallousis were present to represent the application. Mr. Youssef described that he agreed with the staff memo, that the neighborhood was a mix of historical significance and architectural style. Mr. Youssef gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photographs of the home and garage, before showing photographs of homes in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Giallousis commented that this was purpose-built as a two-family home, and added that there was a variety of architectural styles in the neighborhood.

Mr. Schorr commented that he was struck by the similarities between 82-84 East Side Parkway and the new home to it's left, and suggested renovation or partial demolition for 82-84 East Side Parkway instead of total demolition. Ms. Stein commented that the new homes that have been constructed in the neighborhood have been built within the scale of the historic neighborhood. Mr. Friedman commented that he did not see a lot of historic value to the house. Mr. Cornelius commented that the neighborhood has transitioned.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Friedman made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Ms. Grissom seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 4-3:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
AMS	JR	
MA	SF	
HS	DC	
NG		

GARAGE

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
	JR	
MA	SF	
	DC	
	AMS	
	HS	
	NG	

10. 25 White Avenue – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that staff welcomes discussion of the historical significance of this 1904 vernacular Colonial Revival style home.

Alexander Kogan was present to represent the application. Mr. Kogan gave a presentation using the share screen function, sharing photos of the property.

Mr. Cornelius commented that 53 White Avenue was recently found not preferably preserved by the commission. Ms. Stein commented that she would be concerned about how new construction would affect the historic context of the neighborhood.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Grissom made a motion to find the property preferably preserved. Mr. Friedman seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 3-3-1:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
MA	JR	AMS abs
HS	SF	
NG	DC	

The property was not found preferably preserved and demolition was not delayed.

Ms. Grissom left the meeting after this item.

11. 22 Arden Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition of House and Garage

Staff Reported that this is a 1924 Colonial Revival in a well-preserved neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Julie Ross, Inna Esterkina, and Brian Lever were present to represent the application. Ms. Esterkina outlined the project. Mr. Lever, a presentation consultant, gave a presentation using the share screen function, showing photos and describing the history of the home and the developer.

Mr. Friedman commented that he would lean towards preferably preserving the house. Mr. Cornelius commented that this was a common design for Newton, and he was on the fence about context. Ms. Stein commented that she was unsure how new construction would impact the neighborhood.

Karen Lumino, a resident of 11 Arden Road, commented that there are four remaining single-family homes on Arden Road, all of which are similar center-entrance Colonials. She continued by commenting that 80% of the homes in the neighborhood were center entrance Colonials from a similar time period, and that she would recommend preferably preserving the house.

Mr. Schorr commented that there does not seem to be a justification presented for wanting to demolish the home, and that the house seems to be in good condition. He continued by suggesting that a partial demolition or renovation would be a preferred option. Mr. Friedman commented that he agreed with Mr. Schorr that if the house was preserved, people would be interested in it.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR		
AMS		
MA		
HS		
SF		
DC		

Mr. Armstrong left the meeting after this item.

12. 6 Floral Street – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a well-preserved 19th Century farmhouse in a well-preserved neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Arthur Elzon and Michael Yankovski were present to represent the application. Mr. Elzon commented that they agreed with the staff memo that the property should be preferably preserved.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0:

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR		
AMS		
HS		
SF		
DC		

13. 90 Adeline Road – Request for Demolition

Request for Total Demolition

Staff Reported that this is a 1965 split-level ranch style home in a well-preserved neighborhood. Staff recommends finding the property preferably preserved.

Arthur Elzon and Michael Yankovski were present to represent the application. Mr. Elzon commented that the home is only sixty years old, and that he does not believe that provides historical context.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he struggled with the historic significance of mid-century neighborhoods. Ms. Stein commented that she was unsure about the historical significance of this home.

Enrique Testa, a direct abutter of the property, commented that no homes in the neighborhood have been demolished yet, and that he would be concerned about what may replace the property. Victoria, a resident of Adeline Road, commented that they would support the demolition as they do not see a lot of historic value in the home. Ilona, a resident of Adeline Road, commented in support of the demolition.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 2-3

RESOLVED to find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
JR	AMS	
HS	SF	
	DC	

14. 32 Hickory Cliff Road – Request for Demolition

The applicant withdrew the application from this meeting.

15. 712 Watertown Street – Request for Demolition Waiver

The applicant withdrew the application from this meeting.

16. 28 Farmington Road – Request for Demolition Waiver

Request for Waiver of Demolition Delay

Staff Reported that this is a well-preserved example of a Colonial Revival style home.

P.J. Gao was present to represent the application. He gave a presentation using the share screen function, displaying updated plans for the proposed design.

Mr. Cornelius asked for clarification on the materials. Mr. Gao clarified that the material list was uploaded to the application on NewGov. Mr. Friedman commented that he did not like that the siding was vertical on one side of the house and horizontal on the other. Mr. Schorr commented that he loved the rear elevation of the house and would like to include some elements of that design to the front façade. Mr. Cornelius commented that he had concerns about the height that the applicant proposed raising up the home.

Kevin and Meredith Finn, residents of 22 Farmington Road commented that the house looks different from all other houses on Farmington Road, and that they would prefer that the yard not be raised.

Mr. Cornelius commented that he did not believe that the replacement property would mitigate the loss of the historic property.

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

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on June 27, 2024 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 0-5:

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

Voting in the Affirmative:	Voting in the Negative:	Recused/Abstained:
	JR	
	AMS	
	HS	
	SF	
	DC	

Administrative Discussion:

- a) **Approval of minutes from the May 23, 2024, meeting**

Minutes from the May 23, 2024 hearing were unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Respectfully,

, NHC