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Director

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**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS  
NEWTON UPPER FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**DATE:** November 12, 2020

**PLACE/TIME:** Fully Remote  
7:00 p.m.

**ATTENDING:** Jeff Riklin, Chair  
Scott Aquilina, Member  
Laurie Malcom, Member  
Judy Neville, Member  
Daphne Romanoff, Member  
Paul Snyder, Member  
Jay Walter, Member  
Barbara Kurze, Staff

**ABSENT:** John Wyman, Alternate

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Jeff Riklin presiding as Chair. Voting permanent members were S. Aquilina, L. Malcom, J. Neville, D. Romanoff, P. Snyder, and Jay Walter. B. Kurze acted as recording secretary and the meeting was recorded on Zoom.

**959 Chestnut Street – Certificate of Appropriateness (Violation)**

There were two applications on the agenda. The review of the trim details for the main house block and left-side bay was continued from previous meetings. The owner also submitted an application to change the approved fiberglass gutters to aluminum.

**Materials:**

September and October 2020 decisions  
Email clarifying required details  
New detail drawings for left-side bay, crown molding and trim details  
Photographs of left-side bay  
Amendment and photos for aluminum gutters and downspouts  
Additional photos of historic structure  
Detail drawings submitted in October meeting

Elevations submitted in September meeting  
 Elevations, drawings, products, and materials approved in October 2019  
 Engineering approved plans July 2020

J. Riklin noted that new retaining walls were built without Commission review and approval and were in violation. Commission members were concerned that the owner went ahead with the work instead of following the process to apply to the Commission for changes. The owner needed to submit an application for the retaining walls for Commission review. The application needed to address the entire scope of work and include the locations of the old and new walls, the old and new wall materials, wall heights, and grade changes. M. Sinani said that he did not think the walls were subject to review because he did not think they were visible from the public way. A. Lee explained that exterior changes and new construction required an application to the Commission, and that the Commission made the determination of visibility. M. Sinani said he was not aware of this and would submit an application for the retaining walls.

Robert Pierce represented the Park family who were the rear abutters, he said that there was a legal issue with the retaining walls in the easement. The Park family was okay with the side wall but not the wall at the back. Melissa Brown at 949 Chestnut Street was concerned that the main house block was built higher than the original. J. Riklin said that there would be as-built drawings and the Commission would verify the height. Xiaobo Bai at 949 Chestnut Street agreed that the new main house block was taller. A. Lee said the City would investigate; the Historic District Commission and the City Law Department would review the options. Abutters asked about the side porches and about what appeared to be a porch or patio at the back.

A. Lee explained that the Commission should vote on the submitted applications. The Commission could review the merits, hold the application for continuation, or deny because of existing violations. J. Walter moved to determine that there was an existing violation because of the retaining walls that were built without approval, to deny the applications for the trim details and for the change to the fiberglass gutters because of the existing violation, and to request that the applicant submit an application for the retaining walls. L. Malcom seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

#### **RECORD OF ACTION:**

**DATE:** November 17, 2020

**SUBJECT:** 959 Chestnut Street - Certificate of Appropriateness (Violation)

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on November 12, 2020 the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission, by roll call vote of 7-0,

**RESOLVED to determine that there is an existing violation for the retaining walls that are being built without an approved application and to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as submitted for the trim details of the main house block and left-side bay as part of the required remediation plan for the unauthorized demolition of the main house block and left-side bay and to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the amendment to change the previously approved fiberglass gutters to aluminum. The owner is directed to submit an application for the retaining walls that are in violation. The owner can re-submit the application and amendment after the retaining wall violation is remediated.**

#### **Voting in the Affirmative:**

Jeff Riklin, Chair

Scott Aquilina, Member

Laurie Malcom, Member

Judy Neville, Member

Daphne Romanoff, Member

Paul Snyder, Member

Jay Walter, Member

**Pettee Square – Working Session**

Barney Heath, Jason Sobel, Devra Balin, Shane Mark, Jonathan Rockwell and Lori Aho requested feedback on a project to reconstruct and improve the intersection of Oak and Chestnut Streets to make it safer and more accessible. The changes included: a new traffic signal, a raised intersection, utility pole relocations, upgrades to the drainage system, stamped concrete sidewalks, reconstructed curb ramps, landscape and streetscape amenities, lighting upgrades, new pavement markings, and new signage.

The City also wanted feedback on the proposed replacement of the brick area in front of the Depot Café and the brick sidewalk along Oak Street at 1214-1220 Chestnut Street with a stamped concrete to make those areas more accessible; both those areas were within the district boundaries. J. Sobel noted that the plan was to temporarily replace the brick sidewalk with asphalt; and then replace the asphalt with stamped concrete once that was approved as part of the larger project. B. Heath said that the final decision on the stamped concrete was some time away.

**Materials Reviewed:**

Project description  
MHC Form A; includes map with district boundaries  
Project boundaries  
Plans  
Photographs  
Product and material information  
Assessors database map

J. Walter asked if the removed brick could be salvaged. There was discussion about the bump outs and the raised intersection. Commission members raised concerns about snow removal, bus stops, the safety of the Greenway crossing, and traffic backups. J. Sobel noted that the traffic lanes were not being reduced. P. Snyder thought the project was great; he said that many of the concerns were not within the jurisdiction of the Commission. J. Walter said that integrated masonry planters would be appropriate. Lee Fisher requested that the project enhance the historic character of the area which was part of the old village. Jack Neville brought up a possible splash park. Commission members agreed that the temporary replacement of the brick sidewalk with asphalt could be approved for safety reasons, as long as there was a condition to replace the asphalt with stamped concrete even if the improvement project did not move ahead.

**Administrative Discussion**

Minutes: The October meeting minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Recorded by Barbara Kurze, Senior Preservation Planner