

HISTORICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Farrell, Chairman
Ms. Bishop, Recording Secretary
Mr. Kaufman
Mr. Papp
Ms. Zachowski

MEMBERS ABSENT:

The meeting notice was posted more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to commencement of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of the January 18, 2007 meeting
2. Discussion of applications for demolition permits and pre-clearances submitted since the last meeting.
3. Discussion of Building Department and Health Department procedures for Demolition permits
4. Discussion of inventory of structures of historic significance
5. Discussion of criteria or evaluation of structures
6. New Business
7. Next Meeting – Thursday, March 15, 2007

PUBLIC MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. by president, Mr. Farrell.

A Quorum was confirmed.

Ms. Bishop moved the approval of minutes of January 18, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kaufman, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Farrell informed the committee that there continued to be confusion over a pre-clearance application for 57 Hickok Road, but that the owner had agreed to withdraw the pre-clearance application. Mr. Farrell pointed out the property has no historical significance and would not be likely to receive valid objections for demolition from the committee. Should the owner wish to demolish at a later date, they would be better served to submit a regular demolition application at that time.

The committee discussed one new application for a demolition permit that had been filed with the Building Official, and one case where the Health Department had been contacted about a potential future demolition application. The property, 33 Sunset Hill Road, was built in the 1940's. The informal consensus was that this property is not a likely candidate for the filing of a valid objection, and should not require a demolition delay.

The committee discussed the valid objection form, drafted by Ms. Zachowski. Mr. Farrell indicated that he wished to speak further with Mr. Platz, the Building Official, before the forms are made available to the public through the Building Department.

Mr. Farrell expressed appreciation for the great value of the Historical Society's list of Historic Houses in New Canaan, and its useful inventory of files, and books detailing historic properties in town.

The committee discussed the changing streetscape in New Canaan. Mr. Kaufman observed that while the committee is able to encourage preservation of individual houses scattered around town, it is difficult to preserve the whole character of a town. Discussion ensued outlining the charge of the Historic District Commission, and the value of overlay zones, which encourage preservation. Mr. Papp noted that recent changes in planning and zoning ordinances provided some protection from demolition of New Canaan's moderns.

Ms. Bishop distributed copies of newspaper articles highlighting stories of house preservation. The committee discussed the possibility of conducting an event in conjunction with the Historical Society whereby the Historic Review Committee would clarify the demolition ordinance to the public, and invite a panel of speakers to discuss their experiences in preserving historic homes. Ms. Zachowski suggested that an effective campaign to inform the public should include several months of publicity coupled with a series of speakers covering an array of preservation topics. She indicated that Mr. Kovach, Editor of the New Canaan Advertiser would be willing to run a column highlighting a different historically significant house each week. Mr. Farrell suggested that the Historical Society's list of Historic Houses in New Canaan would be a natural starting point to research and select these homes. Ms. Bishop and Ms. Zakowski agreed to contact Ms. Lindstrom at the Historical Society, to discuss the concept further. The committee also agreed that it would be beneficial for an article to be published in the newspaper to provide a clear description of the ordinance. Ms. Zakowski offered to interview Mr. Farrell for such an article.

Mr. Farrell distributed copies of a proposal for a new preservation group currently being organized in town. Mr. Kaufman indicated support for other groups in the community that promote awareness of and advocate the preservation of historic properties. It was also noted that the possibility of having several groups in town dedicated to the mission of preservation might create a competition for limited fundraising dollars or grant opportunities.

The next Historical Review Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2007, to be held in the Board Room.

A motion was moved by Mr. Papp to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Kaufman and meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Susan Bishop, Recording Secretary

