

HISTORICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 16, 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 the commencement of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Review and approval of the minutes of the July 19, 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 applications for demolition.
4. Discussion of plans for disseminating information about historic preservation.
5. New business.
6. Next meeting – Thursday, September 20, 2007

PUBLIC MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 A.M. by the Chairman, Mr. Farrell.

A Quorum was confirmed.

Mr. Papp moved the approval of the minutes of the July 19, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kaufman, and was unanimously approved.

The committee discussed several properties for which demolition applications have been presented, or may be presented. These included the following:

226 BATTERY ROAD
52 ORCHARD DRIVE

It was the general consensus of the committee that, without a formal study of these structures, they appear to be of no historical, cultural, or architectural significance: and therefore are not likely candidates for valid objections to their demolition.

The committee also discussed the property located at 584 West Road. An application for demolition of the house has been filed with the Building Official, and seven written objections to the demolition had been received by Mr. Platz. Copies of these objections were distributed to members of the committee by Mr. Platz.

It was recommended by Town Council, Mr. Jarboe, that as the current agenda did not specifically list this house for consideration, that the committee could amend the agenda to include specific discussion of the written objections. It was noted by Mr. Platz that he is careful to indicate to permit applicants that while their property may not be listed on the agenda, there is always a chance that it may come up in discussions under the heading of "New Business."

Ms. Bishop moved that the agenda for this meeting be amended to include the following item:

Discussion of the pertinent objections to the Application for Demolition of the house at 584 West Road received by the Building Official.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Papp, and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Platz commented that the builder has indicated a willingness to cooperate with preservationists in documenting and photographing the structure as well as to offer assistance in salvaging some of the materials should an outside party be interested. It was discussed at great length what steps should be taken to make the public aware of the significance of the property. Ms. Zachowski agreed to highlight the house in the next "Just around the Corner" article and the Historical Society will be involved with additional documentation. It was suggested that the preservation groups take a proactive role in promoting preservation. Mr. Papp suggested that the developer and local preservation specialists meet to address the best ways to preserve this home and/or its history. It was recognized that the public should become informed about the process of creating preservation standards.

The committee was then given time to read the objections passed out earlier by Mr. Platz. It was noted that although several of the letters did not constitute pertinent objections, only one valid objection was required to impose a demolition delay. Mr. Papp suggested that Mr. Thomas' letter detailing three pertinent objections, and Ms. Beckett's letter, which included extensive documentation could be considered as pertinent objections. After careful consideration the committee agreed that the objections stated in writing by Ms. Beckett and Mr. Thomas were pertinent. Ms. Beckett's objection details historical significance "by virtue of its first owner and subsequent ownership by members of his family and later the Sellecks, all prominent New Canaan families". She attributes cultural significance to the house as well. Mr. Thomas highlights the architectural significance of the building as being not only an example of an 18th century farmhouse, but as an important anchor for other historical houses on West Road.

Ms. Bishop moved that the Committee approve the following item:

The Committee finds, after review and consideration of the pertinent objections to the demolition of the house at 584 West Road received by the Building Official, that the Structure is of historical, architectural, or cultural significance to the

Town of New Canaan as set forth in Section 8(b) of the Ordinance for Temporary Preservation of Certain Historical Structures Subject to Proposed Demolition. According, the Building Officer shall not issue the demolition permit until ninety (90) days after the date the application was filed.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Zachowski, Ms Bishop, Mr. Papp, Ms. Zachowski, and Mr. Farrell voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Kaufman abstained. Accordingly, the motion was passed.

The committee carefully addressed the procedures to be followed in order to recommend a demolition delay to the Building Official. It was noted that the voting action taken by the committee must be recorded within 48 hours after the meeting. Mr. Farrell agreed to contact the newspaper regarding the committee's actions.

Mr. Farrell reminded the committee that the state of Connecticut has amended the 90 day demolition delay to 180 days effective this October. He will meet with Dick White, Chair of the Ordinance Committee, to discuss these changes and how they may affect New Canaan. The committee will discuss this topic further at a later date.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Zachowski, and was seconded by Ms. Bishop. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10.

Ms. Bishop, Recording Secretary