

**Historic Preservation Advisory Commission Meeting
Regular Meeting of August 20, 2012 7:00 pm**

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission took place on the above date. Chairman Dennis Becker read the Open Public Meetings Act and requested Commission Secretary Mrs. Citterbart to call the roll. Commission Secretary Mrs. Citterbart stated there was a quorum.

FLAG SALUTE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Schulte, Ms. Best, Chairman Becker

ABSENT: Mr. Steinberg, Mr. Elvidge

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

July 18, 2012

Mr. Kaplan made a motion to accept the July 18, 2012 minutes. Ms. Best seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with a unanimous "aye" vote.

OLD BUSINESS

#HPC-03-2012- SAK Associates LLC

Block 7.05 Lot 11

24-24 ½ Church Street

The applicant is requesting to demolish the building to the foundation and replace it with a parking area to relieve parking congestion in the area, aid in the flow of traffic to patronized premises, and provide overflow parking for church functions.

Previously sworn Arthur Copcutt stated: We would like to add a catch basin to tie into the existing system.

Mr. Copcutt distributed **Exhibit A-1, Conceptual Parking Plan Block 7.08 Lot 11, dated August 20, 2012.**

Vincent Iacampo, Professional Engineer, stated: There will be no run off from the parking lot to Church Street. All the water will be collected in the catch basin and then conveyed to the storm sewer.

Mr. Becker stated: The Commission went to the building and did a walk through. My opinion is the building is still structurally sound and with repairs such as new windows, a new roof, walls and ceilings it could be put back to residential use. The foundation of the building is absolutely sound. All the beams and the stairs are all structurally sound. I do not think the building is ready to fall down.

Ms. Best stated: I agree with Mr. Becker. I took numerous photos. I looked at the foundation, the first and second floor, and the construction permit issued by the Town for the stabilization of the building and the subsequent approval and it did pass the inspection. Based on all the information presented to us, it does not reflect this building is in such a state that this building presents a threat to the people and it needs to be demolished. I feel the building is structurally sound and there is not enough evidence to weight in favor to demolish the building and put in 13 parking spaces.

Mrs. Schulte stated: What the Historic Commission tries to do is preserve the appearance of historic properties in Newton and I agree I didn't see anything in dire need of destruction to this

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building. Also, you are in a T-6 Zone and a parking lot is not permitted in that zone. You would have to go for a variance.

Mr. Iacampo asked: Would that pertain to a municipal or a metered parking lot as opposed to a private lot?

Ms. Best stated: It applies to general use surface parking as a principal use.

Mr. Kaplan stated: I agree with everyone's comments. I believe demolition of a historic building is an absolute final draw. We do not want to see that. I can see a lot of work has been done to the building on the inside. I believe the building is sound and would not want to see it demolished.

Chairman Becker opened up this portion of the meeting to the public.

Elizabeth Reeves, 22 Church Street, right next door to 24-24 1/2, Newton, stated: The reason I am here is I live in that neighborhood. I am a Preservation Architect. I am an Architectural Historian and employed by Rutgers University as their Preservation Architect. I cared for 350 buildings in various states of repair. I still do some work in the County some of it is pro bono, however, I was asked by the Bank that had foreclosed on the building to go in and do an inspection before they started doing a lot of work on the building. I have 35 years of experience in this field. Working on these old building I have found that they are not built square. This particular building is not built square. The foundation is in good shape. There is no evidence of leakage or mortar disintegration. It is solid. The basement is very clean which is unusual. When you look at these old houses in particular this one, you are looking for what is causing the lean and is it structurally sound? I have been in a lot structural unsound buildings before and there are several things you look for. The first thing you look for is the separation of joints in the wood framing. I was able to get a good look at the roof construction of this building and you couldn't get a dime in between the doweling system. There is some plate rot but that has nothing to do with the structural integrity of the building itself but that explains why it is leaning. In the basement, everything is framed with heavy timber so it is structurally sound. When you study buildings you can't just look at the building you need to look at what that building means to the overall global experience. There is a driveway in between the properties. I went back from the very beginning and using Kevin Wright's history of the two buildings which was on the Town's website and in the Commission's publication. Mr. Wright does a really good job with Deed research. He is very meticulous and he goes owner to owner. Using this information, I put together a timeline of the houses to help explain the disposition of the property. Mrs. Reeves went on to explain that these lots were referred to as the Meadow Lots. In 1808, this was all one lot. Mrs. Reeves went into description of property and owners. What does this all mean for the Town of Newton? This means that the Town of Newton was organized around the Town Green. The Churches were always on Church Street except for the Methodist Church. Church Street became the interface between the Town and the residential communities. If you lose Church Street, you are losing a major historic edge to the center of Newton. Church Street is a neighborhood and it is probably one of the best functioning neighborhoods this Town has. People interact on the street. You see people of all walks of life. We have the food pantry across the street, you have people walking to the Court House, and you see kids coming down the street on their bicycles.

With no other public coming forward, Chairman Becker closed this public portion of the meeting.

Chairman Becker made a motion to deny the demolition of the building for the application HPC-03-2012. Ms. Best seconded the motion.

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AYE: Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Schulte, Ms. Best, Chairman Becker

NEW BUSINESS

HPC- 04-2012- First Baptist Church of Newton

Block 7.07, Lot 13

110 Main Street

The applicant is requesting construction on a canopy for the front entrance.

Did not show up.

HPC-05-2012- Lakeland Bank

Block 8.01, Lot 5

(Formerly Block 715, Lot 8)

30 Park Place

The applicant is requesting construction of a retaining wall to the rear of the building in the alley.

SWORN: Tim Clegg, Maintenance Supervisor for Lakeland Bank

Mr. Clegg stated: We are looking to install a retaining wall on the back of the property. It will go in front of the chain link fence. We are looking to get rid of the graded area to improve the area.

Mr. Becker asked: Did you find cut limestone for the wall to match?

Mr. Clegg stated: No. We did not do any research on trying to match it. We thought we would use something that is readily available to us that will be aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Kaplan asked: Are there any drainage problems?

Mr. Clegg stated: We have not had any drainage problems. When we get heavy rains, we need to rake it up so this will be more of a maintenance issue.

Chairman Becker opened this portion of the meeting up to the public. With no public coming forward, Chairman Becker closed this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Best made a motion to approve the application as presented. Mrs. Schulte seconded the motion.

AYE: Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Schulte, Ms. Best, Chairman Becker

CORRESPONDENCE

Ordinance 130-2012

Ordinance 17- 2012

Resolution #121-2012

Resolution #129-2012

These were given to the Commission for information purposes only.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No public comment

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ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Becker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schulte seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned with a unanimous "aye" vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on September 17, 2012 at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Citterbart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Katherine Citterbart
Historic Commission Secretary

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Exhibit Page

Exhibit A-1, Conceptual Parking Plan Block 7.08 Lot 11, dated August 20, 2012.