

MADISON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – February 9, 2021

Meeting conducted remotely through Zoom

Attending: Madison Historic Preservation (“HPC”) Chair Janet Foster, Vice Chair Jill Rhodes, Members John Forte, Mary Ellen Lenahan, David Luber, John Solu and Carmine Toto; Council Liaison Astri Baillie; and Recording Secretary Laurie Hagerich. Members Chris Kellogg and Max Hart arrived late.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Foster at 7:30 pm and she announced the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. A verbal roll call was taken by Ms. Hagerich.

The minutes of the January 12, 2021, Public Meeting were considered. Ms. Lenahan mentioned several changes but since the changes do not substantially alter the record of the meeting, it was agreed the minutes be approved with the suggested revisions. On motion made, seconded and unanimously approved, the minutes were accepted with the aforementioned revisions. The revised version of the January 12, 2021 meeting will be posted on Rosenet.

Approval of 2020 Annual Report:

The draft of the 2020 Annual Report was circulated by email and several comments and corrections were made. Ms. Lenahan suggested several other changes which were discussed and will be made. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously carried to approve the 2020 Annual Report with the changes discussed. Dr. Rhodes was thanked for her work in preparing the very comprehensive Annual Report.

Sign & Façade Reviews:

There were no new Sign and Façade applications; however, Ms. Foster was made aware of a new TCC application for the Provident Bank Building at 98 Main Street. A new rear addition is proposed which will contain a number of residential apartments. Since the property is outside the Madison Civic and Commercial Historic District, HPC has no comment.

Old Business:

Design Guidelines Review Project:

Ms. Foster reported that Clark Caton Hintz has requested historic photos and she sent some that were part of a display at the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts Annex. She asked that other members share any photos they feel may be relevant. It was noted the new Design Guidelines will cover the Madison Civic and Commercial District as well as residential guidelines for the Bottle Hill Historic District. The Design Guidelines will be useful in assisting HPC in the review process for all types of buildings, and as general information about preservation “best practices” for property owners all over town.

Ordinance Revision:

Dr. Rhodes reported on progress with the draft ordinance. At the Planning Board’s January meeting, a joint sub-committee of the Planning Board was appointed, along with Dr. Rhodes and Ms. Foster for the HPC, attorneys for both parties and the Borough Planner, Dr. Susan Blickstein. The group will discuss ways to come to mutual agreement on the proposed historic preservation ordinance so it can be approved by the Planning Board and passed by the Borough Council. A follow-up conversation between Astri Baillie, Ray Codey, Janet W. Foster, Jill Rhodes and Mary Ellen Lenahan confirmed that additional funds would be available to re-engage attorney Jason Hyndman to continue his work in guiding the HPC through the next steps in the process.

Updates from Liaisons:

Planning Board:

Mr. Forte, Planning Board Liaison, spoke of the recent re-organization meeting. Ms. Baillie mentioned there are plans to review land use ordinances and a new requirement for inspections to insure that height limitations on new buildings are complied with.

Zoning Board Liaison:

Ms. Lenahan attended the Board's meeting two weeks ago where it was decided a special meeting in March would deal with the new plans for the Lyons Theater site. The Save Madison Theater group now has an attorney. In a separate phone call with Borough Administrator Ray Codey, the HPC was given approval to engage an attorney if necessary as the theater redevelopment matter proceeds.

Open Space Liaison:

Dr. Rhodes reported the Open Space, Historic Preservation and Recreation Advisory Committee last met in November when there was a recommendation for approval of funding for the Hartley Dodge Building's Plaza Project and the East Wing renovation. There is another meeting of the Open Space Committee on Wednesday, February 10 to discuss the plans for the Masonic Lodge building. Ms. Baillie, also on the Open Space Committee, added that the Borough is open to a partnership with the Masons to use the Lodge's first floor for some civic purpose, but there are many issues to overcome. A grant application is being developed to support building renovations and upgrades. It was noted HPC is strongly in favor of preserving this building and has sent a letter of support to relevant parties.

Madison Historical Society Liaison:

Mr. Lubber mentioned the Madison Historical Society plans a virtual program on Stories of Slavery in NJ presented by Rick Geffken on March 16, 2021.

Council Member Liaison:

Mr. Lubber mentioned recent discussions about work on the interior of the Luke Miller "Forge building" which could be funded by the Historical Society. This led into a report from Ms. Baillie, our Council Liaison, who indicated that she has had contact with the Parks Commission, and they will take the lead on the Luke Miller "Forge building" project, partnering with the Historical Society. Ms. Baillie will ask the Parks Commission to present a detailed plan to the HPC, including ultimate use for the site. By ordinance HPC is to give input on projects affecting Borough-owned buildings in the Historic Districts. This one is also within the Bottle Hill Historic District, and part of Summerhill Park, so there is a strong public interest in what happens to the building. Ms. Baillie also mentioned that a Master Plan for the Borough's parks is being developed. That plan may help clarify uses for the "Forge building" or its relationship to the rest of Summerhill Park.

Ridgedale Avenue Watch: 61 Ridgedale Ave

Mr. Solu thanked Max Hart for his efforts in keeping an eye on façade work along Ridgedale Avenue in the Bottle Hill Historic District. HPC is pleased with the work on 61 Ridgedale Avenue, especially the new windows which are much more appropriate in scale and form for this historic building.

Future Meetings, Adjournment:

The next meeting of the Commission will be on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, via Zoom.

There being no further business, on motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Laurie Hagerich, Recording Secretary