

MADISON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting – March 9, 2021

Meeting conducted remotely through Zoom

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

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Rhodes at 7:35 pm. She announced the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and the Open Public Meetings statement was read. A verbal roll call was taken by Ms. Hagerich.

Sign & Façade Reviews:

Cambridge Street Papers, 7 Waverly Place:

Review of one new Sign and Façade application was added to the agenda and photo was shown of new signage for Cambridge Street Papers at 7 Waverly Place. After review, the subcommittee found that the new sign did not detract from or have any adverse effect on the Madison Civic and Commercial Historic District and the sign was approved.

Old Business:

Design Guidelines Review Project:

Ms. Foster reported there was some progress in that some historic photos, consisting of vintage post cards, were sent to Clark Caton Hintz. She will contact CCH to check on status of the field work.

Ordinance Revision:

Dr. Rhodes reported that on February 24 the joint sub-committee of the Planning Board, Borough Council, and the HPC met to discuss the draft ordinance and the various issues that need to be resolved, including the 180-day period for demolitions and mapping of properties which would fall under HPC control. Those attending the meeting were Dr. Rhodes, Ms. Foster, Jason Hyndman, HPC’s attorney, Vince Laughlin, Planning Board attorney, Borough Planner, Dr. Susan Blickstein, John Forte and Astri Baillie. There was discussion of the Westfield ordinance, which is considered to be comprehensive and well-written. Mr. Hyndman spoke in defense of the 180-day period and wrote a follow up letter outlining the issues of concern. Another meeting will be scheduled. Dr. Blickstein agreed to work on the map.

Updates from Liaisons:

Planning Board:

Mr. Forte, Planning Board Liaison, said there was no formal Planning Board meeting and he referred to the previous report on the Ordinance Joint Sub-Committee meeting.

Zoning Board Liaison:

Ms. Lenahan reported the Zoning Board has requested HPC presence at the special meeting on Thursday, March 12, focusing on the Lyons Theater plans. Ms. Lenahan gave a report on the March 4 meeting, where detailed architectural plans were presented for the new building. A previous Zoning Board meeting focused on issues such as garbage collection, traffic and fire issues. Ms. Lenahan showed renderings of the proposed new building, including comparison of the 2019 building with the 2021 version, side view showing placement of the Madison Theater History Plaque, as well as site lines and elevations, streetscape views and third floor plan with alcoves. The next meeting will be March 12, when HPC presence is requested to give official comments. HPC agreed the memo sent by the Commission to the Zoning Board in January, which dealt with all issues and is on file, would constitute HPC’s official position on the

application. Ms. Foster will comment on the memo for the record at the March 12 Zoning Board meeting.

Council Member Liaison:

Astri Baillie reported the Council has been working on budget development and the affordable housing project. Borough Planner Susan Blickstein is working on the mapping project for the draft ordinance. Ms. Baillie will be attending the next joint sub-committee meeting for the ordinance revision.

Open Space Liaison:

Dr. Rhodes reported the Open Space, Historic Preservation and Recreation Advisory Committee met on February 9, when there was discussion of renovation of the interior of the Luke Miller “Forge building”. The Parks Commission would be willing to partner with other organizations, such as HPC and Madison Historical Society, but has no funds to contribute to the project. Although the Historical Society does have funds earmarked for the project, HPC agreed that determination should be made on the ultimate use for the site before work begins. Ms. Foster agreed to arrange a meeting or conversation with interested parties and once a use for the site is determined, the project can be re-visited or tabled. It was also mentioned that the Masonic Lodge project is working on resolving the shortfall in funding. The March meeting of the Open Space Committee is cancelled.

Madison Historical Society Liaison:

Mr. Luber mentioned there will be good attendance at the Madison Historical Society’s virtual program on “Stories of Slavery in NJ” presented by Rick Geffken on March 16, 2021. The Historical Society is working with the Borough on renovation of the East Wing of the Hartley Dodge Memorial where they hope to establish a local history museum. Mr. Forte offered his assistance in this endeavor as a Trustee of the Hartley Dodge Foundation with access to some historic items that could be displayed in the converted space.

Ridgedale Avenue Watch:

Mr. Hart said there was no actionable news to report.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2021 Public Meeting, were considered and on motion made, seconded and unanimously carried were approved as written.

Public Comment was dispensed with since there were no members of the public present.

New Business:

Mr. Forte reported the Academy Road Association has a strong interest in learning more about the process of becoming a historically designated district. Ms. Foster will speak to the group in April and if the matter does move forward, a budget request would be made. Mr. Forte also spoke of an upcoming celebration of the 100th anniversary of some homes on the street. He will ask the Historical Society for help in researching the history of Academy Road, which was one of Madison’s earliest planned developments. There was discussion of issues arising from an abandoned home on the street and possible steps to bring about proper maintenance of the site.

Future Meetings, Adjournment:

The next meeting of the Commission will be on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, via Zoom, since the Borough is planning on continuing Zoom meetings through April.

There being no further business, on motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Laurie Hagerich, Recording Secretary