WALTHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Minutes for Meeting of FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Chairman, pro-tem, Mort Isaacson, **called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM**. Commissioners introduced themselves to audience: Marie Daly, Mort Isaacson, Kathleen Dufromont, Jack Cox, and Sean Wilson were present.

Also present: Attorney Michael Connors, Mr. Thomas Gildea, Attorney Laura Cannon, Mr. Frank Schaeffer, Mr. William Giezentanner

**Reading and acceptance of January minutes:** moved to accept by Ms Daly; seconded by Mr. Wilson and passed by committee.

**Organizational Items, Announcements, Updates, and the reading and description of Correspondence** were tabled because Mr. Green was not present.Said tabling moved by Ms. Dufromont, seconded by Mr. Cox, and passed by committee.

**Stonehurst:** Written report and questions were tabled because Ms. Clifford was not present.

**Public Hearing: 256 Second Avenue:** Mr. Connors represented the petitioner who wants to build a 100 bed hotel on this site. The previous building had been demolished in 2012 and the Marriott Hotel wants a special permit to increase the floor ratio. This property will be facing route 128 and is located in an industrial setting. Mr. Isaacson noted that there was no evidence of historical significance on the property. Mr. Cox moved to sign the development prospectus. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion and it passed.

**Public Hearing: 210 Ash Street:** Ms Cannon, representing Mr. Gildea, explained that a demolition permit was being requested. The property is over 75 years old and any architectural features from the original design have been altered over time. Asbestos shingles and vinyl replacement windows are currently on the house. In 1957 the house was converted from a single to a two family dwelling and at that time much of the woodwork had been eliminated, replaced or altered. Ms. Cannon stated that the property has fallen into disrepair and much of the original detail of the home is now gone. She felt that a demolition of this dwelling would not adversely affect the neighborhood. Mr. Cox asked Ms Daly if she knew of any historic inhabitants of the house. While the Hopkins and Jackson families did reside there, and two of the men had been supervisors at the Watch Factory, there was no evidence of historical figures ever having lived there. When Ms. Daly asked what would be built on the property, the owner, Mr. Gildea, spoke up saying that he wanted to build another two family house. He plans to replicate some features from the old house such as the porch with a sunburst design, similar to other porches in the neighborhood of other mostly two family homes from the same period. When Ms. Daly asked if the profile of the building would be the same, Mr. Gildea said that the new house would be deeper and would allow for parking on the property. Mr. Cox asked Mr. Gildea if he would be willing to show his plans to Mr. Green, and Mr. Gildea readily agreed to do so. In the meantime, Ms. Daly moved that the house is not historically significant; seconded by Ms. Dufromont and passed by commission.

**Public Hearing: 380 Lexington Street – demolition of secondary structure:** Mr. Frank Schaeffer, representing Mr. Khoren Dertsakian, explained that the outbuildings in question were in the “tear down or fall down” category. His client wants to demolish this unsafe building and put up a storage and garage facility in keeping with the style of the main home. Ms. Daly mentioned that the original building housed a cobbler shop during the pre-industrial era. Mr. Schaeffer showed plans of the prospective building depicting a storeroom and two car garage. The design replicated the number of windows in front of the original structure. Mr. Isaacson pointed out the rounded arch-style doorway of the original building and wondered if that type of entryway could be fashioned in the new building. Mr. Schaeffer said that was not a problem. When Mr. Cox asked what the building would be made of, Mr. Schaeffer assured the commission that there would be no vinyl and that the entire structure would be made of wood. Mr. Isaacson asked about the presence of two dormers in the front of the building (there were none in the original) Mr. Schaeffer explained that those dormers had been added to the design for more natural lighting and that they could be either eliminated altogether or could be located in the back of the building, away from street-view.

Mr. Wilson moved that the building is historically significant, and that the demolition delay law will be invoked. Ms. Daly seconded the motion and it passed by commission. Mr. Wilson also moved that WHC permit the chair to waive the demo delay once written agreement is presented with noted stipulations: building constructed of wood; windows must be 6 over 6; rounded arch over the garage doors; dormers to be located in the back of the building. Again, seconded by Ms. Daly and passed by the commission.

**Intermission** took place from 8:05-8:15 at which time Mr. Isaacson signed papers for 256 Second Avenue project.

**Public Hearing: Reading and Acceptance of Draft Letter re: Cooper/Elm Street for Ordinances and Rules Committee of the City Council:** After some editing (changing the date to read 2015, and replacing the word “unsightly” with “not harmonious” and specifying Boston Manufacturing Company Textile Mills instead of “mills”) the commission added “Consideration should be given to the walls of the five story concrete garage, using brick to make the structure more consistent with the Boston Manufacturing Company.” Mr. Cox moved to approve the letter with amendments and Ms. Daly seconded; passed by commission.

**Public Hearing: Councillor Darcy regarding joint CPC application for digitalization of newspapers at WPL.** Ms. Daly moved to table this due to Councillor Darcy not being able to be present. Seconded by Mr. Cox and passed by commission.

**Public Hearing: CPA application for Fernald School:** Ms Daly recuses self. Mr. Cox moves to table; Mr Isaacson seconds and is passed by commission.

**Public Hearing: Zoning discussion with Mr. William Giezentanner, consultant to the Rules and Ordinances Committee:** Mr. Giezentanner explained that this project is to be a complete revision of zoning bylaws; current laws need to be rewritten in a more user friendly way. He is striving to clarify the language. A draft should be completed by June of this year and zoning proposals will be submitted to the City Council in September, 2015.

At this time, Mr. Clarence Richardson, the newly appointed historic commissioner, joined in the audience.

Ms Daly expressed concerns over

\*change in zoning possibly impacting single family neighborhoods where builders may purchase single family homes, tear them down and build multiple family dwellings

\*small lots being grandfathered

\* legal protection afforded to properties located in historic districts? (Mr. G will look into this matter)

Mr. Cox expressed concerns over

\*whether zoning laws protect city owned buildings

\*new buildings destroying site lines in historic districts (Mr. G. said that has to apply to whole district)

\*homes built sideways on lot; blank walls facing street

Mr. Isaacson expressed concern over

\*how subdivision relates to zoning (Mr. G said that would have to be written into the new zoning laws)

The WHC thanked Mr. Giezentanner for his time and expertise.

At 9:15 pm, Mr. Coxs moved to **adjourn the meeting**; seconded by Ms Daly and passed by commission