

Lancaster, New York

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES:

Wednesday, August 22, 2012

I. Attendance / Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chairman Meyer.

Commission Members:Campbell, S. x Harnack, W., Vice Chair x Meyer, M., Chair x McNichol, S. x Alternates: Kwiatek, R. exc. Hassett, J. exc. Stribing, J. x (Vill. Bd. Liaison)Guests:

W. Cansdale, Mayor

P. Maute, Village Board Member

D. Stempniak, Town Council Member

T. McCracken, Town Parks & Recreation Dept.

Various members of the Library Board

Roll call indicated that four (4) members were present and a quorum of four (4) existed.

II. Public Hearing:**A. 16 School Street / Town of Lancaster (T. McCracken) / Building Demolition**

Donna Stempniak, on behalf of the Town, initiated the presentation.

Discussion: The Town, as petitioner on behalf of the Library Board, is interested in purchasing the property at 16 School Street, through a grant from the State Education Department (SED), in order to demolish the building to expand the adjacent Town Library parking lot. The process includes obtaining a sign-off from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO has deferred signing-off based on the approval of demolition by the Village HPC.

The updated survey sheet in the HPC file indicates the structure dates to c1910; an earlier survey sheet indicates a structure on the site in 1865, but it is not likely the current structure. The property had additions constructed in the 1950s and again in the 1960s

when the building height was also raised. The 1960 addition also included a glass-enclosed side porch at the north side.

S. Campbell voiced concerns regarding potential demolition of the mature trees existing in the rear yard of the property. She questioned if they would be taken down to maximize parking. Al Martin (Library Board) stated the existing lot held 19 spaces and the Board hoped to add 19 more spaces. A formal plan has not been worked up to evaluate which trees could/could not be retained.

M. Meyer asked if it was the Library Board's intent to come back to the HPC with their final site amenities/development plan if the demolition was approved. Board members responded that it was their intent.

W. Harnack questioned the need for added parking with other lots in the neighborhood available. He has noticed these areas are identified as available on a map within the Library. He also noted that a historic home 11 Lake Ave. was demolished to make way for parking at the Presbyterian Church, one of the lots identified on the library map.

D. Stempniak responded that although these lots are identified, the Library has no legal arrangements with any of those property owners. T. McCracken added that the proximity of those parking lots to the Library is not ideal. He went on to say that he checks all plans at the Town level regarding project site landscaping and he is respectful of mature trees and the quality of the landscape.

W. Harnack stated that he has concerns regarding Plum Bottom Creek with regards to run-off storm water. D. Stempniak stated that the run-off could not directly go into the creek and that it had to utilize the storm sewer.

S. McNichol added that this might be an opportunity to enhance the creek area for public view if the site use (demolition) was approved. W. Harnack stated that this would be consistent with the Village Master Plan, which opened the waterway through the Central Business District. He stated that the creek presently is an underutilized amenity and this could potentially be a beginning point of development of that amenity.

W. Harnack summarized his opposition to the demolition/parking stating that he felt the structure is in good condition and contributes to the historic fabric of the neighborhood, outweighing the need for another parking lot. He added that one historic structure at 11 Lake Ave. had already been taken down for parking. S. Campbell also voiced her concern for maintaining the historic fabric of the neighborhood and the Historic District.

A. Martin spoke to the shared parking discussion, stating that the Presbyterian Church allows the Library to use the lots when there are no Church functions taking place. They are not always open for Library use. He continued stating that the Library has been waiting for a long period of time for this property to become available since it was not available at the time the library building was constructed. With the consolidation of the Town libraries from two buildings to this one, usage at this building is up to more than

100,000 visitors per year.

S. McNichol stated it was her opinion that the site is best utilized as a parking lot. It appears that it would be safer than the current parking lot, on-street parking and shared lots across the street. T. McCracken added that the new parking lot expansion would help mitigate parking issues on School St.

M. Meyer stated it was his opinion that the existing house was not an architecturally significant structure, and was probably not eligible for National Register due to the additions; therefore he could support a motion to demolish in favor of a parking area to serve the Library.

MOTION: S. McNichol – to approve demolition as submitted; Second: M. Meyer

VOTE: 2 -AYE; 2 – NAY (**Split – Not Approved**)

JUSTIFICATIONS:

2-AYE (McNichol & Meyer) – Not a historically significant resource; retention not in the best interest of the community as expressed at this meeting.

2-NAY (Harnack & Campbell) – Although modest, resource contributes to the historic fabric of both the neighborhood and Historic District; added parking further erodes historic building stock in the Village.

No conditions to an amended motion were entertained.

M. Meyer advised the petitioner of the appeal process, he will draft a letter to the petitioner regarding the outcome of this hearing for the petitioner to submit to SHPO.

III. Next Meeting: Regular Meeting - September 12, 2012

IV. Adjourn: At 7:42 PM

Respectfully submitted,

M. Meyer Chair, Village HPC