

**Northampton Historical Commission  
Minutes**

**DATE:** Monday, February 24, 2020  
**TIME:** 5:30 PM  
**PLACE:** City Hall Hearing Room, 210 Main Street

Member	Present
Vacancy	
Martha Lyon – Acting Chair	
Barbara Blumenthal	X
Pauline Fogel	X
Dylan Gaffney	
Vacancy	
Craig Della Penna	X
Sarah LaValley - staff	X

Ms. Blumenthal called the meeting to Order, 5:30 PM

**Public Comment**

None

**Approval of Minutes – June 24, 2019 and August 12, 2019**

Mr. Della Penna moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Ms. Fogel, the motion carried unanimously.

**225 State Street – Building Construction Delay Discussion with Property Owner**

Ben Lewis, property owner, apologized for demolition of the outbuilding on the property prior to receipt of a building permit and in absence of Historical Commission review. The building was in poor condition and he does not believe the Commission would have found it to be significant. Plans for development of the property, including planned demolition of the principal structure are underway.

Ms. Blumenthal noted that the proposed work is not under the Commission’s purview.

Mr. Lewis requested that the Commission lift the two-year delay on new building permits on the parcel. A construction date is not known at this point.

Mr. Della Penna noted that houses on State Street formerly had frontage along the Northampton-New Haven canal.

Ms. LaValley noted that demolition of the principal structure, which was built prior to 1900, would also be subject to Demolition Review.

Mr. Della Penna stated that it was a shame the barn was removed, but that he also would not want to hold up planning for the larger project for a full two years.

Ms. Fogel asked for clarification on process. Ms. LaValley replied that Section 161-8 of the Demolition Ordinance provides that “If a building and/or structure subject to this chapter is demolished without first obtaining a building permit for demolition, no building permit shall be issued for a period of two years from the date of the demolition on the subject parcel of land unless otherwise agreed to by the Commission.” A \$300 fine for violation of the Ordinance was also issued.

The Commission discussed the historical importance of accessory structures. Mr. Della Penna moved to lift the two-year delay to allow planning to advance. Seconded by Ms. Fogel. Ms. Blumenthal stated that demolition of the structure, which also proceeded without valid building permits, was egregious, and expressed concern about a licensed contractor completing work in this way. Mr. Lewis asked what additional information may be helpful. The Commission suggested any additional information regarding the building's construction date, and its condition, if available. Mr. Della Penna withdrew the motion. The Commission planned to take up the agenda item at a future meeting.

### **Request for Support Letter for MassHistoric MPPF Application – Smith Charities**

David Murphy, Smith Charities President, stated that Community Preservation Act funds were provided for a historic building study of the Smith Charities building on Main Street. This has been completed, and the organization plans to seek state Preservation Projects grant funding for the priority items it identified. CPA funds will be sought as a match if the grant is received.

Ms. Fogel moved to find that the Historical Commission supports the work and the grant applications. Seconded by Mr. Della Penna, the motion carried unanimously.

### **Northampton-New Haven Canal Signage Grant**

Robert Madison, canal historian, stated that the Pomeroy Foundation offers a signage program, and he would like to propose signs along the route of the canal on existing multi-use trails. The Commission discussed canal history, signage along the full route, and possible locations for signs locally.

Mr. Madison will follow-up with Historic Northampton.

### **Demolition Review Ordinance Date Shift**

Ms. LaValley stated that the City Council approved the Ordinance change presented by the Commission to change the applicable date of demolition review to primary structures built in 1945 and earlier at first reading.

### **State Hospital Projects**

Ms. Blumenthal stated that the Memorial Park and fountain will be going out to bid soon as part of the City's MassWorks grant.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM