



Town of Reading

16 Lowell Street

Reading, MA 01867-2683

Phone: 781-942-6654

Fax: 781-942-9071

Email: mscloth@ci.reading.ma.us

West Street Historic District Commission

WSHDC MINUTES

Meeting Dated: November 10, 2009

Location: Berger Room, Town Hall

Time: 7:00 PM

Members Present: Richard Schubert, Chair; Steve O'Shea, Vice-Chair; Virginia Adams, Priscilla Poehler, and Everett Blodgett

Associates Present: Ilene Bornstein, and Sharlene Reynolds Santos

Also Present: Michael Schloth, Recording Secretary

Mr. Schubert agreed to continue as temporary Chair but suggested now that the Commission has its full complement of members a formal election of officers should be held before the meeting adjourns. The Commission agreed.

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order.

The Commission acknowledged its lack of institutional knowledge of its responsibilities, property-review procedures, and the District itself and proceeded to discuss how to change this situation. Mr. O'Shea said he had access to a member of Lexington's Historical Commission. Ms. Adams and Ms. Reynolds-Santos offered to look into compiling an inventory of structures in the District of historical or architectural significance. Mr. Blodgett informed the Commission that he was in possession of a card catalogue of Reading houses which was compiled by Ms. Miriam Barclay (deceased) of the Antiquarian Society. Ms. Adams and Mr. Blodgett presented a brief overview of an event they recently attended on the topic of writing legal decisions. A suggestion was made to schedule walking tours of the District.

215 West St

The applicant was not present. The applicant proposes to replace shingles.

Mr. Blodgett moved that as the proposed work constitutes ordinary maintenance, the Commission excludes it from review. Ms. Poehler seconded and the motion passed 5:0:0.

The Commission directed the recording secretary to sign and issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability to the applicant.

266 West St

The applicant was not present. In his application, the applicant proposed to replace a garage door on an historical structure (barn).

Mr. O'Shea asked if he should recuse himself as he lives across from the applicant. The consensus of the Commission was that he should not have to as the Historic District By-Law itself states that the Commission should include at least one owner of property in the District. The Chair said he would ask the Town Manager to put the question to Town Counsel.

In the ensuing discussion, the Commission decided the work fell under its jurisdiction and therefore requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, the consensus of the Board was that a public hearing would not be necessary to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness because 1) the garage door is located far from the street and 2) the replacement door is of a more appropriate historical style than the original door.

Ms. Poehler moved the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work proposed for 266 West Street. Ms. Adams seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0.

Mr. Blodgett moved the Commission waive the public hearing as per Section 5.18.7.5 of the Historic District By-Law. Ms Adams seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0.

Section 5.18.7.5 also requires abutters within 300 feet of the property in question must still be notified of the Commission's decision. Discussion ensued as to why residents outside of the District must be notified. It was suggested the abutters should include those living within the District only. Mr. Blodgett pointed out that the District was established by the vote of Town Meeting and it is an asset not only for the residents of the District but for the Town. The Commission agreed the 300 feet limit should have the standard interpretation of including all owners of properties within a circle of radius 300 feet centered on the property in question.

The recording secretary informed the Board he would write the notice to the abutters, post it with the Town Clerk, and mail it to the abutters. After the appeal period (10 days), if he had not received a response to the notice, he would inform the applicant that the work could proceed.

Other Business

Commission Officers.

Chair: The consensus of the Commission was it was happy to continue with Mr. Schubert as Chair. Mr. Schubert accepted the nomination. Ms. Adams so moved and the motion carried 5:0:0.

Vice-Chair: Ms. Adams nominated Mr. Blodgett for Vice-Chair. Mr. Blodgett declined the nomination. The Chair nominated Mr. O'Shea. Mr. O'Shea accepted the nomination. Ms. Adams seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0.

Meeting Time

The consensus of the Commission was that when it must meet an effort should be made to schedule the meeting for Wednesdays at 7:00 PM.

Ms. Adams moved to adjourn. Mr. Blodgett seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

These minutes were prepared by Michael Schloth and submitted to the West Street Historic District Commission on March 29, 2010; these minutes were approved as amended by the West Street Historic District Commission on March 29, 2010.

Signed as approved,

Michael Schloth, Recording Secretary

Date