

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
January 26, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Dana Laird, Chair; Barry Belardinelli; Jordon Hensley; Elizabeth Golden; Tod Bryant; David Westmoreland

STAFF: Laura Kenny; Susan Gilgore; Diane Jellerette(7:15)

OTHER: Daryn Reyman; Patsy Brescia

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Laird called the meeting to order at 7:02. A quorum was present.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM 9/22/2021, 10/27/2021, 11/17/2021, 11/30/2021, 12/22/2026

There was no motion to accept the minutes. These minutes will be accepted at the next committee meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. REPORTS FROM BOARDS

a. Norwalk Historical Society; Diane Jellerette

Ms. Jellerette reported that the society has received two grants. The first is a Sharp grant in the amount of \$10,000. This will allow the society to put its exhibits online.

The second is a Cultural Operating Support grant in the amount of \$12,100.

The current exhibit, "Timeline" has been very well received. There have been a series of virtual lectures, and one in person lecture. More lectures are scheduled, the next one "Childhood in Colonial America" will be on Feb 3, 2022.

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The society will be partnering with Historic Rowayton for Black History Month, with a virtual lecture.

In March, the society will be partnering with the League of Women Voters and having a presentation from the Ct Hall of Fame called Powerful Voices in Democracy.

The society had their first second grade class come through to see the Timeline exhibit before they went back into lockdown. Hopefully there will be more of these in the Spring.

b. Lockwood-Mathews Mansion; Susan Gilgore

Ms. Brescia will continue to oversee the building project. She reports that preliminary bids far exceeded the budget allotted. The allotted budget is \$5 million from the state and \$2.5 million from the city. To date they have only spent state money on design and consultants. They have asked for \$6 million from the Historical Commission budget to continue the project. It is a very complicated project. There are no studs in the building which makes adding mechanicals or wiring difficult. There is no heat or lighting in most of the building. They have presented to planning and zoning and are in discussion with the city on how to proceed. At the next meeting, she would like the architect to present to the commission on the importance of the building and the renovation project.

Ms. Gilgore reported that Netflix is closing out their filming next week. They have provided funds to cover repairs of some minimal damages that occurred during filming.

Ms. Gilgore reported that the museum has received a grant from the CT Humanities in the amount of \$33,600. This is to cover operating costs and expand community access by offering free and low cost admission.

There is a fashion exhibit coming up, curated by Lynn Bassett, a renowned fashion expert. The subject is sustainable fashion during the 19th century, with a focus on local industries and poisons and other controversial materials in the production of textiles.

At the same time, a juried contemporary impressionist exhibit will take place in the billiards room. Submissions are being accepted now.

The young writers competition is titled "Breaking Barriers". Students are asked to write about people that have broken barriers that inspire them.

Ms. Gilgore reported that the museum has applied for a Museum Makeover grant through the CT League of History Organizations. A group of curators will look at the period rooms to make sure they are up to expectations

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5. REPORTS:

a. Buildings

Mr. Westmoreland reported they received bids for the kitchen remodel. He will go over them with the architect.

At Mill Hill, the ramp is currently being worked on and will be finished by Spring.

b. Cemeteries

Mr. Westmoreland reported that an old stone wall rebuilder is rebuilding the fallen stone wall at Keller Comstock. The restoration looks original and will be complete in the next day or two. He will be providing quotes for a few other walls in disrepair including a wall at Pine Island.

A large tomb at Pine Island had fallen over, and that has been repaired.

c. Financial

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he has put in a flat budget request for 2022-2023. It will include transferring about \$12,000 to facilities management. He has requested six million dollars for the mansion improvements.

He has also asked for \$125,000 for the jail interior renovation, \$18,000 for Mill Hill exterior painting, \$10,000 for the museum collection and \$10,000 for cemetery and sidewalk.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on Demo Delay Ordinance from Tom Livingston

This discussion was postponed until the next meeting when Tom Livingston could attend.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation from Daryn Rayman-Lock on NHS items

Ms. Reyman went through all the framed art works and ceramics/ lighting, and furniture for pieces that are potential for deaccessioning. She looked for works that had no connection to Norwalk. She will forward the itemized list to the committee, and the committee will vote next month. Mr. Westmoreland thanked the committee for their work on this.

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B. Ms. Kenny reported that the Religious Renovation Committee will be accepting applications for funds for the Norwalk Congregational Church.

C. A vote on the below Amendments has been postponed until the next meeting. Ms. Kenny will collect any notes, and will forward them to Tom Livingston.

Proposes Amendments - 2/21/22

CHAPTER 55 - DEMOLITION DELAY

§ 55-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the City of Norwalk, to establish a procedure whereby owners of buildings with significant historic characteristics will be informed of the economic, tax, aesthetic and other benefits of historic preservation, and to further the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of architecturally significant buildings and structures by providing adequate time for all parties to consider and put forth appropriate development alternatives to demolition, including attempts to find a purchaser who will retain or remove such historic or architecturally significant building or structure or who will present some other reasonable alternative to the last resort of demolition.

§ 55-2. Definitions.

“Demolition” means any wrecking activity directed to the disassembling, dismantling, dismembering and/or razing of any building or structure or part thereof. The term also means and includes the act or process of delaying or withholding maintenance of a building or structure in such a way as to cause or allow significant loss of architectural integrity or structural stability. The term shall not be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature which does not involve a change in the appearance or design thereof.

§ 55-3. Permit required.

No person shall demolish any building, structure or part thereof without first obtaining a permit for the particular demolition undertaking from the Chief Building Official. Such permit shall be issued except as otherwise provided in this chapter and pursuant to Section 29-406 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

§ 55-4. Permit requirements for certain structures.

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When the building, structure or exterior part thereof (collectively referred to as the "building or structure") to be demolished is (1) at least 50 years old, or (2) contained within the boundaries of an historic district as contemplated by Part I of Chapter 97a of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, or (3) is designated as an historic property as defined by the provisions of Section 7-147p(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, then no permit shall be issued except in compliance with the provisions of this chapter and Section 29-406 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

§ 55-5. Application procedure.

Any application to the Chief Building Official for a permit to demolish any building or structure, pursuant to the provisions of § 55-4, shall be subject to the following procedure:

A. The application for a demolition permit shall include the following information:

- (1) Common name, if any, and actual street address of building or structure to be demolished;
- (2) The name, address and telephone number of the owner(s) of the building or structure to be demolished;
- (3) The year built of the building or structure to be demolished;
- (4) The square footage or dimensions of the building or structure to be demolished;
- (5) A brief description of the materials, configuration and use of the building or structure to be demolished;
- (6) One or more current photographs of the building or structure to be demolished showing at least two elevations;
- (7) The reasons for requesting a demolition permit;
- (8) A brief description of the proposed reuse, reconstruction or replacement for the building or structure to be demolished; and
- (9) The names and addresses of the owners of all properties adjoining and across the street from the building or structure to be demolished, according to an attached copy of a pertinent portion of the current assessor's map.

B. Within 5 days following the initial submission of an application for a permit to demolish a building or structure, the applicant shall send a copy of such application by certified mail and electronic mail to the Norwalk Historical Commission, the Director of Planning and Zoning, and City of Norwalk

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any individual, firm, corporation, organization or other entity which has requested, in writing, from the Chief Building Official copies of such applications.

C. Within 10 days following the initial submission of an application for a permit to demolish a building or structure, the applicant shall:

(1) Publish in a local newspaper having general circulation in the City of Norwalk a notice of intent to demolish (hereinafter referred to as the "notice");

(2) Mail copies of such notice to the owners of all properties adjoining and across the street from the property on which the building or structure to be demolished is situated; and

(3) Post in a conspicuous location on the property on which the building or structure to be demolished is situated a sign at least 24 inches by 36 inches in size visible from the nearest street or other accessway adjoining the property. Such sign shall include copy of the notice and shall contain the word "demolition" in capital letters no less than two inches in height. The sign required hereunder shall remain posted on the property if the permit is issued until the completion of all demolition activities authorized by the permit.

D. Within 14 days following the initial submission of the application, the applicant shall file with the Chief Building Official a statement verified under oath on a form approved by the Chief Building Official certifying that all of the notice requirements of this chapter have been complied with and attaching thereto a copy of the notice and evidence of publication, as well as evidence of mailing as required under subsection B above. Upon filing the certification statement, the application is deemed filed. If any notice requirement is not complied with, the Chief Building Official shall reject the application as incomplete.

E. In the event that a written, acknowledged objection, stating the reasons for opposing demolition is filed with the Chief Building Official within 21 days after filing the certification statement as required by § 55-5D, above, the Chief Building Official shall not issue the permit until 180 days after the application is deemed filed. If no such written objection is filed, the Chief Building Official may issue the demolition permit, provided that all other requirements have been complied with.

F. The Norwalk Historical Commission may hold a public hearing on any application to which an objection has been filed and may issue recommendations on alternatives to demolition to the Chief Building Official.

G. In no event shall the issuance of a demolition permit be delayed, if its application has not been withdrawn, for more than 180 days from the date the application is deemed filed.

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§ 55-6. Demolition by Neglect.

Throughout the demolition delay period imposed under § 55-5, the owner of record of the building or structure proposed to be demolished shall secure and maintain such building or structure in a manner that minimizes the risk of water penetration, vandalism, fire, or other significant damage. Partial demolition, including the removal of windows, doors, roofing, or any other building material, is expressly prohibited during the demolition delay period.

§ 55-7. Exceptions.

This chapter shall not apply to: (1) any structure determined to be unsafe by the Chief Building Official according to Section 12.0 of the State of Connecticut Basic Building Code or as defined as a hazardous building under § 26-11 of the Norwalk Code; (2) any structure that is less than 400 square feet in size, or (3) the lifting of a building or structure to comply with regulations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the City of Norwalk governing coastal flooding, provided such lifting does not involve a change in appearance or design of such building or structure.

§ 55-8. Violation and fines; lapse of permit.

A. In addition to other penalties and remedies provided by law, each violation of the provisions of this chapter shall be punishable by a fine of not more than [\$1000], with each day of such violation constituting a separate violation.

B. In the case of full or partial demolition of any building or structure in the absence of or in advance of a valid demolition permit, the Building Official shall impose a twoyear restriction on the property during which no earthwork, landscaping, construction or further demolition may take place on the subject property or on any adjoining parcels under common ownership and control without the review and approval of the Norwalk Historical Commission. The restriction may only be lifted by written agreement of the Building Official and the Norwalk Historical Commission.

C. If demolition is not commenced within six months after issuance of a permit, such permit shall be deemed null and void.

§ 55-9. Report of Chief Building Official.

The Chief Building Official shall issue an annual report to the Mayor, the Common Council, and the Norwalk Historical Commission concerning the number of demolition applications filed, the number of applications subject to this chapter, the number of applications that were objected to and whether these buildings and structures were actually demolished.

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7. ADJOURNMENT

******Ms. Golden moved to adjourn the meeting.**

******Mr. Hensley seconded the motion.**

******The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Chaple
Telesco Secretarial Services