

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK HISTORICAL COMMISSION
DECEMBER 28, 2022
VIA ZOOM**

ATTENDANCE: Dana Laird, Chair; Eric Chandler; Lisa Wilson Grant; Mark Jackson

OTHERS: Diane Jellerette, Norwalk Historical Society; Douglas Hempstead, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum; Todd Bryant, Norwalk Preservation Trust; Attorney Liz Suchy; Colin Gross, Michelle Andrzejewski

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Laird called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM 11/30/2022

The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present this evening.

4. REPORTS FROM BOARDS

A. Norwalk Historical Society; Diane Jellerette

Ms. Jellerette gave an overview of the events that took place during the month of December.

B. Lockwood-Mathews Mansion; Susie Gilgore

Mr. Hempstead reported that the Mansion is shut down for the winter. They are going out to bid on January 6th with bids due back on January 27th. Each of the previous bidders have been contacted. He asked if anyone knew of a Connecticut, minority owned contractor and if so, to forward that information to him. They are in the process of making two alternative plans; one based on being open during the construction and the other based on being closed.

5. REPORTS

A. Buildings – there was no report presented his evening.

B. Cemeteries– there was no report presented this evening.

C. Financials – there was no report presented this evening.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Otocast; Norwalk Audio Tour

Ms. Laird reported that the individual is trying to get his bill paid. They need to determine the appropriate department in City Hall.

B. Demo Delay Ordinance update

Ms. Laird said she was informed that Mr. Livingston did not yet have an answer.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. 31-35 South Main Street - Sono Hotel Expansion – Attorney Suchy

Ms. Suchy, represented the applicant, GR Sono Partners. She reviewed the history of the hotel and said it was constructed in 2020. The proposal is to demolish the structure and construct and addition to the existing hotel. She said the structure, while old, does not have architectural significance.

Mr. Gross presented the proposed plans for the six story structure. He noted that it would connect with the existing structure. The roof will hold the mechanicals with the potential for solar panels. The existing hotel has 102 rooms and the addition will have 48 rooms.

The building is on the National Registry of Historic Places. Ms. Suchy said the application is currently pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission. She said that although the structure is on the National Register of Historic Places, that does not prevent it from being demolished although there is a process.

Mr. Bryant discussed what would be involved to touch this property. He said it was part of the 1985 boundary extension of the South Main Street Historic District. Since the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, it is protected by the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. He added that the State can sue to preserve the building. It is a long and expensive process. This plan would demolish this building and the area would lose an important building.

Mr. Bryant said the building was once part of the Post Office. The State Historical Preservation Office is very concerned about demolishing the building and would like to work out a deal to preserve a substantial part of the building, rather than demolish it.

Mr. Bryant said that Mr. Beinfeld offered to allow him to walk through the building. He urged members of this commission to join him. Ms. Suchy said she would like Mr. Devonshire to join the walk through.

Ms. Laird said the next meeting of the Historical Commission will take place on January 25th or they could hold a special meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services