

**Village of Williamsville
Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Kate Waterman-Kulpa, Chairman
Anthony Bannon, Member
Mary Lowther, Member
Chuck Akers, Member

Also present: Charles Grieco, Village Attorney
Deborah A. Habes, Deputy Clerk
Al Yates, Trustee Liaison

Excused: Wes Stone, Vice-Chairman
Dr. Stephen Dyson, Member
Susan Palmer, Member

Guest: Marty Zwierzchowski

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

ON MOTION by Ms. Lowther, seconded by Mr. Akers, it was moved to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2018 meeting, as submitted.

Motion carried. 4 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

5548 Main Street – Owner, Marty Zwierzchowski

Mr. Zwierzchowski asked the members if he could make a short request of them for their guidance and possible assistance regarding his intention to seek funding for the renovation/restoration of the exterior of his building at 5548 Main St. This building has local landmark status, but not national or state. Mr. Zwierzchowski reported that he would like to restore the original brickwork and remove the aluminum board that covers up the dentil detail at the top of the building. He would also like to replace all the windows and remove the existing awning. In addition, he would like to replace the first floor storefront windows and trim above the door frames. The new windows would be aluminum with divided lights. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa recommended a window company named Pacifica that does a nice job with replacement windows.

Mr. Zwierzchowski shared copies with the members of original photos of the building from several different eras. He stated the building was built in 1854 and he thought he would restore it to that era. Other photos showed the building in later times during the 20th century. These photos demonstrated the changes over the many years to the exterior of the structure. The photos from that time showed that the first floor windows were not as they appear today, so they have been altered over the years to a storefront-type appearance. He would like to replace the current first

floor storefront windows with thermal bronzed aluminum windows and expose the original bricked pillars.

Mr. Zwierzchowski asked if there were any tax credits or grants that the HPC could recommend to him to pursue.

He estimates his budget to be around \$170,000, with about a third of it coming from grants. He would take out a loan on the remainder.

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa suggested that he should first choose a “period of significance” for the building to start the process of seeking grant funding from any public sources. She mentioned DRI grants. A national landmark status would open him up to the possibility of commercial historic tax credits.

She suggested that he might choose the photo of the building taken in the 20th century (undetermined date) since the windows already have been replaced from the originals of 1854. The dentil molding at the top of the building is revealed. The storefront windows on the first floor are already there also. Mr. Zwierzchowski stated he would prefer to restore it to its 1854 original state.

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa stated he would probably be freer to restore the building as he wished if he received private funding, instead of public funding. Government grants are much stricter in their requirements and restrictions. She suggested he speak with an attorney that is an expert in tax credit possibilities for further information regarding public funding opportunities.

Trustee Yates suggested Amherst IDA. Mr. Zwierzchowski stated he was in the process of speaking with Maggie Winship of the Village and Town of Amherst for information on possible funding opportunities. The Wendt Foundation was also mentioned as a possible source for him to explore.

Mr. Bannon mentioned a UB professor named Brad Wales who specializes in this. He has students do research and some light construction.

HPC can help to guide him but he needs to firm up his funding sources first. The main possibilities they suggested were: Main Street grants, DRI grants, and registering it as a national landmark. NYSCA was also suggested. The president of NYSCA is very strong on architectural preservation but Mr. Zwierzchowski would have to find a not-for-profit to go through. Trustee Yates said he could investigate if Village Preservation Foundation, which is a 501c3, could do it. Mr. Zwierzchowski gave his email address to the members: marty@martysformalwear.com for further contact and information, and thanked them for giving their time this evening.

OLD BUSINESS

CLG Conference – July 12 & 13

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa shared information on the upcoming CLG Conference to be held in Buffalo. Preservation Buffalo Niagara is organizing it.

July 12th – Registration is free for this CLG training session which will count for required HPC yearly credit. 8:30am – Noon. This session will be held in the Embassy Suites Hotel at 200

Delaware Ave. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa suggested that the July 12th training was the most important portion of the conference for our HPC members.

Attendees: Bannon, Waterman-Kulpa, Lowther, Stone, Palmer, Akers. (Dr. Dyson – Unknown)

Will Trustee Etu attend? Will Trustee Rogers attend? Trustee Yates indicated he could attend the July 13th portion of the conference if needed. Go to Preservation Buffalo Niagara website for the schedule.

Vanishing Houses on Main Street

Ms. Lowther is concerned about the number of the Village's old houses, and those on Main Street, that have been or are in danger of being demolished. There are several houses on Main Street, such as LeeLee's and the Mano house, which have both recently been sold and are reportedly being considered for demolition for use as parking lots by the new owners. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa stated that LeeLee's might not be of historic interest, but the Mano house might be. Also, Ms. Lowther expressed concern that the old house at 24 Garrison Rd. has been sold to Iskalo and they have merged the properties. Iskalo has also purchased another house on Park Drive.

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa stated that preservation of old houses on Main Street must be seriously considered. Trustee Yates suggested that someone from HPC should sit on the Community Plan Update Committee. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa is in favor of doing an informal survey of houses still left Main Street since we don't have the budget for an intensive level survey at this time. Could look at the photo collection that the Historical Society has of Main Street in the 1950s.

There was discussion about the Village Board's outlook on historic preservation, since the Village Board has rejected both the Starbucks Building and the Blum Building nominations. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa stated the HPC has been frustrated with both those decisions. The HPC would like to know more about the reasons for denial. HPC is ready to re-nominate both buildings.

Trustee Yates stated he believed there were holes in the original application for Starbucks and in speaking to the original owner, he decided against the nomination. There was discussion about validity of the claims from both the owners of the 2 properties stating that their mortgages were in jeopardy if buildings were landmarked. Mr. Grieco stated that a mortgage clause plays no role in HPC nominations for landmark status. Ms. Lowther would like to see a written opinion from SHPO on this topic. She also wondered why the Village Board did not ask HPC any questions. She was not aware that the Village Board's public hearings on Starbucks Building were taking place. It would have been the right thing for them to make the HPC aware so that one or more of the HPC members could have been in attendance at them and spoke about their reasons for nominating these buildings.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bannon, seconded by Ms. Lowther, it was moved to re-nominate Blum's, 5727 Main St., (art deco) and Starbuck/Alex and Ani Building, 5429 Main St., (mid-20th century) for local landmark status.

On the question:

Mr. Grieco indicated that the Village Board would have to provide detailed reasons why they declined to nominate them. A public hearing will have to be scheduled.

Mr. Akers suggested the HPC should make a public statement for the record.

Ms. Lowther stated HPC should collect all the files (HPC and Village Board minutes) in time for the July 24, 2018 HPC meeting regarding the 2 properties and the nomination process for each before re-nominating them. She thinks HPC needs to add more narrative, which could be done at the July meeting also.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bannon, seconded by Ms. Lowther, it was moved to rescind their motion to re-nominate 5429 Main Street and 5727 Main Street in order to have time to collect prior minutes and records and have time to sufficiently review them so that the HPC can make an informed determination regarding re-nomination of the 2 properties in question.

Motion carried. 4 – 0.

ON MOTION by Mr. Akers, seconded by Ms. Waterman-Kulpa, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Motion carried. 4 – 0.

Next HPC meeting will be held on July 24, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.

Deborah A. Habes,
Deputy Clerk