



JONATHAN F. MITCHELL
MAYOR

City of New Bedford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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MINUTES

September 11, 2017

Ashley Room, City Hall, 133 William Street

Members Present:

Diana Henry, Chair
Bill King, Vice Chair
Bill Barr
James Lopes
Meghan Kish

Members Absent:

Janine da Silva

Secretary and City Planning Staff:

Anne Louro, *Preservation Planner*

Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Roll Call:

A formal roll call was conducted confirming a quorum of the members present as stated above. The Chair indicated that M. Kish would serve in the primary NPS position.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the August 7, 2017 public meeting were approved.

Continued Public Hearings

Case # 2017.08

18 Johnny Cake Hill (Map 53, Lot 161)

Certificate of Appropriateness: Expansion of Captain Paul Cuffe Park

The Chair indicated that Case # 2017.08 had been continued to the October 2nd meeting at the applicant's request.

Motion to take Case#2017.06 out of order. Moved by B.Barr and seconded by B. King

Motion carried.

Public Hearings:

Case #2017.16

Union Street Improvements (N. Water Street to Acushnet Ave.)

Certificate of Appropriateness: Landscaping and Sidewalk Amenities

Manny Silva, Acting DPI Commissioner and Lisa Sherman from CDM Smith presented the plans for the Union Street Improvement Project, a two-phase, two-year enhancement project to upgrade infrastructure and provide streetscaping enhancements funded through a state grant. Ms. Sherman noted that the first phase included the area from N Water Street to Sixth Street and that the second phase would continue to County Street. The underground infrastructure improvements are currently underway and that the streetscaping is being reviewed by the Commission.

Ms. Sherman indicated that the scope of work included sidewalk and street paving materials, street furniture and traffic signal equipment. Ms. Sherman noted that the plan was to retain and mimic the current materials within the District in the design proposal. Ms. Sherman reviewed the types of materials being proposed, with the explanation of the use of dyed concrete in areas where there might have been bluestone, the continued use of a brick amenity strip, and described the addition of pedestrian bump-outs at the intersections.

Ms. Sherman described the proposed use of the City's standard black metal street furniture and continuing the use of the white warning strip at the crosswalks. She noted that the exact placement of the street furniture could be collaboration between the Commission and the design team upon time of installation.

There was discussion regarding the addition of new painted crosswalks at the bump-outs and the existing poor conditions of the bluestone crosswalks. Ms. Sherman explained that the bluestone crosswalk at Johnny Cake Hill would remain due to the challenges of the existing grade. A. Louro asked if the bluestone crosswalks at the other corners could be removed and replaced with Belgian blocks since they would no longer be functional. There was brief discussion regarding the deterioration and maintenance challenges of the existing bluestone crosswalks. Ms. Sherman explained that the grant funding was limited but that she would try to add it to the scope of work. Mr. Silva indicated that perhaps it was something that DPI could address at a later date if it could not be funded through the state grant.

Ms. Sherman noted that the traffic signals were being upgraded at the corner of N Second and Union Streets which led A. Louro to ask about the existing cobra light at that corner which contained equipment. Ms. Sherman stated that the City owned the light and that Extranet owned that pole mast, which would remain at that location without the light head. She continued to explain the addition of new street lights on the south side of Union Street proposed to be the "New Bedford" style lighting with the acorn lamp head. A. Louro expressed her desire to use the copperhead style on the south side of Union Street to provide uniformity to both sides of the street. There was recognition that the south side of Union Street was not within the District and there was discussion regarding the light output of the copperheads versus the New Bedford style light. Ms. Sherman indicated that increased costs for the copperheads will be a factor but will be investigated.

B. Barr asked for clarity regarding the use of bump-outs and their function. Ms. Sherman explained that the bump-outs were a planning measure used to provide pedestrian safety and lessen the walking distance between intersections. B. Barr stated his dislike of the bump-outs and the asymmetric layouts. Ms. Sherman indicated that the retention of parking spaces reflected in the design of the proposed crosswalk layouts, as ideally each corner would have two ramps resulting in a symmetrical crosswalk layout. Ms. Sherman also explained the use of rain gardens which are planting areas that collect water runoff.

There was confirmation that the street furniture would be uniform and match the existing planters located along Union Street. The discussion of consistency led to the review of the lack of bluestone along the stretch of sidewalk from N Second Street to Acushnet Avenue. That section of sidewalk is all brick, which would remain. Ms. Sherman also noted that the use of copperheads may result in inconsistency in numbers, due to the need for more light fixtures to compensate for light output.

Commission members articulated the desire to have consistency within the District and to strive for the best design, utilizing the use of copperhead lighting on both sides of Union Street, despite added costs. Mr. Silva agreed with the Commission but indicated cost may be a determining factor, but the use of all copperheads would be actively explored as part of the design.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by B.Barr and seconded by J. Lopes.

Motion carried.

There were no public comments offered or recorded in favor of the petition, nor in opposition to the petition.

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by B. Barr, and seconded by B. King.

Motion carried.

Members indicated that all their questions had been addressed within the presentation and that a motion could be entertained.

MOTION to approve Case #2017.16 and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition/request that CDM Smith and DPI work with Staff to strongly explore and consider the use of copperhead lighting on the south side of Union Street.

Motion moved by J. Lopes and seconded by B. King.

Case #2017.14

66 N Second Street (Map 53, Lot 258)

Certificate of Appropriateness: Ground Sign

The Chair indicated that Case # 2017.14 had been withdrawn without prejudice by the applicant.

Case #2017.15

66 N Second Street (Map 53, Lot 258)

Certificate of Appropriateness: Parking Signage

A. Louro briefed members regarding the two applications which were submitted for review at 66 N Second Street. She explained that the applicant's agent, Poyant Signs, submitted two separate applications for the property; one for parking signage and the other a ground sign. She noted that approximately two weeks ago, Poyant Signs contacted Staff and withdrew the application for the ground sign. A. Louro explained that the ground sign which had been proposed within the submitted application had been installed by another sign company, creating a violation.

A. Louro stated that earlier that day she had informed the property owner of the violation related to the ground sign and that there was the possibility that the Commission may not take action on the proposed parking sign application due to the existing violation.

A. Louro noted that the scenario now exists in which a property owner, which has an existing violation, is seeking an approval for a separate certificate. She noted that the Solicitor's Office was consulted to determine whether it was within the Commission's authority to not entertain a separate, unrelated application at a property which had an outstanding violation.

A. Louro indicated to the Commission that based on information provided by the Solicitor's Office the Commission had the authority to continue the review of the parking sign application until the ground sign violation was addressed, or they could entertain the parking sign application and review it on its own merits.

A. Louro informed the members that the property owner was made aware of the existing violation related to the ground sign as well as the possibility of the application for the parking sign being continued. The Chair indicated her disposition to continue the case due to the existing violation. There was brief discussion related to approving the parking signage contingent on curing outstanding violations, with consensus against that proposal.

MOTION to continue Case #2017.15 to the November 6th meeting.

Motion moved by B. King and seconded by J. Lopes.

Members discussed the Commission's existing violation policy, and articulated their frustration that generally violations were not being addressed in a timely manner. The current enforcement policy relative to violations and fines was reviewed with A. Louro explaining the previously approved violation notification process which purpose and intent was not to exact a fine, but to seek compliance through an initial advisory notice.

The pending amendment to the District ordinance relative to violations and penalties was discussed with D. Henry and B. King advising members to their outreach efforts to garner support in the City Council. Members expressed concern that if the ordinance amendment was not approved that the Commission's ability to address violations would be hampered. A. Louro explained that the District's enabling legislation allows for fines and penalties.

Members were in agreement that they preferred not to wait for the ordinance amendment to be approved in order to address violations within the District and discouraged with their feeling of ineffectiveness suggested that a meeting with DPHCD staff and a representative of the Solicitor's Office be arranged to discuss the ongoing matter.

Old Business:

J. Lopes advised members regarding properties on Acushnet Avenue and Tallman Lane which came before the Commission a few years back as part of a City sponsored demolition package. He noted that at the time of the demolition request the properties were vacant but structurally sound. He noted that due to the City Council's decision to use the demolition delay, the properties were purchased and rehabilitated by the private sector.

B. Barr sought clarification relative to the District boundaries, as he thought the boundaries extended to the south side of Union Street. A. Louro explained that when the District was formed in 1972, the State and National Park standards for districts were different; and current standards require both sides of the street be within a district's boundaries. Members expressed their desire to reevaluate the current District boundaries.

B. Barr asked about the exterior flood lights at the Candleworks building with A. Louro responding that she would follow up on the matter.

Other:

Several members indicated that they would be unable to attend the scheduled board trainings as they would be travelling out of the country. A. Louro noted that the November 6th scheduled Commission meeting would require rescheduling to accommodate a board training session.

Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by J. Lopes and seconded by B. Barr. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

NEXT MEETING Monday, October 2, 2017

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro

Secretary to the Historical Commission

Preservation Planner

Approved: 11.01.17