



City of Niagara Falls, New York

P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069

NIAGARA FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Brett Doster, Vice Chairperson

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 2nd, 2023

City Council Chambers

745 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brett Doster, Vice Chairperson

Jessica Collins

Georgia Robinson-Bradberry

Kristian Ruggiero

Jessica Berry

Noah Munoz

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Andrea Fortin-Nossavage

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda for the meeting was made by **Mr. Ruggiero** and seconded by **Ms. Robinson-Bradberry**.

Brett Doster	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Georgia Robinson-Bradberry	YES
Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Jessica Berry	YES
Noah Munoz	YES

Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of July 6th, 2023 with corrections was made by **Ms. Robinson-Bradberry** and seconded by **Mr. Doster**.

Brett Doster	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Georgia Robinson-Bradberry	YES
Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Jessica Berry	YES
Noah Munoz	YES

Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. NYS SHPO Training

Linda Mackey and Jennifer Walkowski from the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) presented the Commission members with a training session on the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, grant applications, a potential new survey of historic properties, and other important elements of a municipal historic preservation program.

2. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Vote

A discussion of voting on permanent chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission was held.

Mr. Pesarchick explained that Mr. Doster and the rest of the members would need to consider running for Chairman or Vice Chairman. He stated that at the next meeting of the HPC, the vote would be added to the agenda as an Action Item. At that time, nominations would be held and a vote taken.

Mr. Doster asked if he served as vice chair for two years.

Mr. Pesarchick stated that he would look at the bylaws and let him know if he could run for Chairperson or continue to serve as Vice Chair.

Mr. Doster asked if that would be an organizational meeting in September. Mr. Pesarchick stated that it would be an organizational meeting on September 2nd, 2023.

PLANNING AND HISTORIAN REPORT

Mr. Pesarchick reported on a property at 760 4th Street. He explained that the applicant, Rameaz Qaiser, did not obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for siding and window renovations on the property, but Mr. Qaiser began work anyways. Code Enforcement issued a Stop Order on the project and Mr. Qaiser is now asking for a COA to move forward.

Mr. Pesarchick asked the HPC members if they would like to hold a special meeting to hear the COA application, or wait to the regularly scheduled September meeting to address the issue. Mr. Pesarchick said he had some concerns because the siding on the building has been removed and said it might not be a bad idea to have a special meeting sooner.

Mr. Ruggerio asked if Mr. Qaiser was working with a contractor. Mr. Pesarchick said he believed so. Mr. Munoz said that he felt the issue was on the applicant, so the Commission did not have to hold a special meeting sooner.

Mr. Doster asked to clarify the situation. He said that he thought Mr. Qaiser had obtained a standard roofing permit but not the rest of the permits. Mr. Pesarchick said that a roofing permit had been obtained but not a siding permit or a window permit.

Mr. Doster said that the Commission could schedule a special meeting. Mr. Ruggerio said he was pretty wide open for a meeting and noted that it was a balance between following the law and protecting the historic structure.

Ms. Robinson-Bradberry said that the Commission has not been active for a period of time and that she felt that property owners thought they did not have to follow through with Commission requirements. She said that the stop work order “got their attention” but that the Commission needed to follow through and complete the COA permit process as an example for others in the community. Ms. Robinson-Bradberry advised Mr. Pesarchick to set up a special meeting and advise Mr. Qaiser on what could be done in the interim.

The Commission members agreed to coordinate a special meeting.

Mr. Doster asked Mr. Pesarchick to share the concerns stressed at the meeting to the owner/applicant so he can address them before they meet.

Mr. Doster asked about the Commission's law to provide funding for applicant experiencing financial hardships. Mr. Pesarchick said that the applicant would not be able to receive assistance based on criteria because the City's Historic Preservation Law only allowed for hardships for demolition.

Mr. Doster also asked about potentially using the repairs clause of the Historic Preservation Law to allow Mr. Qaiser to complete the work, but was unsure if this was a possibility under City law.

Ms. Berry asked if the original siding was on the property or if the new siding had been installed. Mr. Pesarchick said that the original siding had been ripped off and the house was exposed. Mr. Pesarchick said that Mr. Qaiser told him that the original siding was broken in places.

Mr. Munoz said that the applicant had also installed a concrete driveway. Mr. Doster said that was outside the Commission's review powers. Mr. Munoz said that the property had just been sold a few months ago.

Mr. Pesarchick said he would email the Commission and Mr. Qaiser in the morning.

Ms. Robinson-Bradberry asked about property on Second Street that was to be acquired through eminent domain. Mr. Pesarchick said he had not heard much about it, but that the City was going to acquire it.

Mr. Doster stated that the application is being considered for The Turtle property at 25 Rainbow Boulevard, so there is a work moratorium for the property.

Mr. Pesarchick stated that we are almost done with the receiving comments stage and are waiting for the Planning Board's to be consolidated. Mr. Pesarchick said he will schedule a public meeting after all comments are received, but this would likely not happen until October.

Ms. Robinson-Bradberry asked about the status of the former Niagara Falls Episcopal Church building on Main Street at Lockport Street, across from the library. Mr. Munoz said he thought Blue Cardinal Capital owned the property, but he could be mistaken. Mr.

Doster said that he had done some work with Blue Cardinal in the past and believed they did not have the funds to complete all the projects they wanted to on Main Street.

Mr. Pesarchick said that a COA application for the former Presbyterian church at 822 Cleveland Avenue would be submitted soon. Tom Yots of Preservation Studios in Buffalo is handling the application.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made by **Mr. Doster** and seconded by **Mr. Ruggiero**.