

The City of Auburn
Historic Resources Review Board
c/o Office of Planning and Economic Development
Memorial City Hall - 24 South Street
Auburn, New York 13021
(315) 255-4115 Fax 253-0282

Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2016 7:00pm

Present: Michael Deming, Ed Onori, Linda Frank, Paul McDonald, Jim Hutchinson, Richard Stankus

Staff Present: Christina Selvek

Meeting opened by Chair Michael Deming.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 13, 2015 made by Jim Hutchinson, seconded by Ed Onori. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chair opens Public to be Heard portion of the meeting.

Christina Selvek mentions that the City Clerk is announcing Historic Resources Review Board meetings at City Council meetings and making it known that the meetings are open to the public.

Certificates of Appropriateness

No Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) applications were received in January of 2016.

Other Matters:

a. Board Vacancy

Christina Selvek: There has been a board vacancy since Betty Mae Lewis resigned in May and the Mayor's office recently received a cover letter and resume from Andrew Roblee that meets board qualifications set by the Federal National Park Service. Andy Roblee is the former facilities manager of the Seward House and also has background in Historic Preservation. The Mayor is looking for comments or questions from board members about the appointment but the intention is to bring the recommendation to City Council on February 18th and appoint Andy to HRRB before the March meeting.

Michael Deming requested a copy of the resume for review.

Christina Selvek will work with the Mayor's office and distribute the resume for board members to review.

Richard Stankus asks is there is a formal pathway, either written or implied, that when board members vacate the position that the board would be notified to either recruit or make recommendations for the vacancy to the Mayor's office. It is the Mayor's decision but board members should recommend candidates for this board. The board was made aware of Betty's vacancy but was not aware that candidates were being considered for the position.

Michael Deming: Everyone who is here on the board has come through recommendations.

Christina Selvek: The board approval process is at the Mayoral level. I am not aware of anything in our Code that is related to board appointment but will review it. The mayor has had difficulty filling vacancies on this board.

Board members are in agreement that they have an obligation to provide recommendations/ names to the Mayor for filling vacant HRRB Board positions and would like to do so in the future.

Richard Stankus mentions that he can provide recommendations of two to three people who are qualified for the board and would like to be aware of board (HRRB) vacancies seeking to be filled in the future.

Christina Selvek recognizes that this board would like more communication and input on the process and asks board members if a request should be sent to table the appointment which will be in front of City Council on February 18th.

Michael Deming requests the cover letter and resume to be emailed to the board.

In the future Christina will put a board vacancy on the agenda for discussion.

b. Financial Disclosure Form

Christina Selvek: This is a reminder that the annual financial disclosure forms are due to the City Clerk office by February 15th.

c. Annual Communication to the Residents

Christina Selvek: As the board requested an annual communication letter was mailed to property owners in the ordinance and local landmark property owners to remind them of the local Certificate of Appropriateness process as well as point out resources available to them. I have not heard from anyone. Seward House did call and mentioned that the new facilities manager will be doing improvements in the spring and they will be submitting an application.

Michael Deming asks about support from the State level.

Christina Selvek: There has been a lot of staff turnover on the State Preservation office. Currently we do not have a regional technical rep to help us with preservation applications. They have moved to the CRIS system that projects can be submitted to. The hand on local discussion is not there anymore.

Christina asks board members if the letter was appropriate or if any additions or corrections were needed.

Richard Stankus responded that the letter was very appropriate and is a good starting point. Board members agree.

d. Planning for the 25 Anniversary Celebration of South Street Historic District

Christina Selvek: Looking for suggestions. The federal Government is doing a Preservation 50 celebration across the nation and NY State is doing a celebration of the 1966 preservation act, which coincides with Auburn's 25th year anniversary of the Historic District. It would be nice to do something. I could go to Council for a budget request if necessary.

Paul McDonald contacted the Seward House and they would be happy to do something and be part of the celebration.

Richard Stankus agrees that the Seward House would be great and suggests inviting historic property owners with a special personal invitation.

Christina Selvek: National Preservation month is May and the weather is generally nicer. If we use City funds for this we do need an educational component. With the National Park being established it would be nice to extend an invite to the NPS and request them to give an update on the project. We could start with an educational component here at the City and then walk over to the Seward House afterward.

Board agrees on the recommendation.

Linda Frank: It would be nice to have something, such as a pin, for those who live in the district. Something to designate them.

Richard Stankus recommends a name tag identifying them as a historic homeowner.

Michael Deming: It would be nice to give them something to put in their house.

Christina asks if board members would like the event in conjunction with First Friday.

Paul McDonald- Seward House has open house on First Fridays so food and wine are set up in the garden.

Board agrees that First Friday is a good date.

Christina Selvek asks the board if they would like the Mayor to do a proclamation.

Board members agree that a proclamation for people within the district would be well received.

Christina Selvek: It is my thought that this would be in lieu of the award ceremony that is done every year.

Michael Deming: If we are interested in doing plaques we should get an intern from Cornell to help with the research and to see if homeowners would like to be part of the project. In the past the interns from Cornell were really good.

Christina Selvek: Asks board members if there is any interest in district signage. The board is not interested in any additional signage along the roadway.

Linda Frank: If the homeowners are at the gathering we could introduce the idea (plaques) to them.

Christina Selvek: I will contact NPS and Seward House to see if we can coordinate for May.

e. Other Business

Current Police and Fire Station:

Michael Deming would like to send a note from the board to City Council on nominating the Police and Fire Station to the National Register before they sell the building. Is concerned what will happen to the building in the future.

Christina Selvek: There is the CLG program and National Registrations may be eligible for that but I would need to reach out to Crawford and Sterns about the process. City Council may need to approve a resolution on it. Either way this beneficial for the board and for a private developer since they will have access to historic tax credits.

Historic South Street Neighborhood Association:

Richard Stankus updates the board on First Presbyterian Church and the change in leadership of Ministro Ministries. Richard also states that dedicated homeowners in the Historic District have put a lot of blood sweat and tears into their homes and we as an organization need to respect the folks of the Historic South Street Neighborhood Association. This group is a bona fide group of passionate individuals who preserve this district. Although we may call this History's Hometown, the City does not make this History's Hometown it's the people in the neighborhoods and organizations such as this. So I hope the City could recognize this group by informing them when things happen, not after the fact. They should be treated as a partner with the City as I believe they do more than the City does to maintain the Historic District. I hope in the future there are open lines of communication and that people understand that what happened should have never happened with the Case Mansion.

Christina Selvek: Do you know what the Church's intent is with the building?

Richard Stankus: No. I do not think the Church knows.

Board members discuss the disrepairs of the Case Mansion.

Christina Selvek: The resource is our priority and the maintenance is not being done on the building so I am not sure if we should do some special outreach to the church, who is a property owner in the district. Under the ordinance you are mandated to keep your property in a good state of repair.

Richard Stankus: They should still be obligated because otherwise it will crumble.

Linda Frank asks about the status of 88 South Street. Christina Selvek will look into the property.

The board discusses the Schines Theater and is concerned with its disrepair. Ed Onori mentioned that he is trying to help the Arts Council move forward and apply for grants.

The next regular scheduled meeting is Tuesday, March 8th at 7pm. Motion to adjourn made by Paul McDonald, seconded by Richard Stankus. Meeting adjourned.