

**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**  
March 8, 2016 7:00pm

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

Staff Present: Christina Selvek

Meeting opened by Chair Michael Deming.

Chair welcomes new board member Andrew Roblee.

Andrew Roblee introduces himself stating that he is the former Seward House facilities manager and is currently undergoing training at Cornell in Historic Preservation.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 9, 2016 made by Richard Stankus, seconded by Ed Onori. Andrew Roblee abstained. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chair opens Public to be Heard portion of the meeting.

Elizabeth Koenig, Owner of 67 South Street: 67 South Street, the Dulles House, is on the National Registry and is seeking to gain local landmark status. When looking at the criteria we fit six out of the ten. Historic South Street will benefit from this and Auburn would as well. We bought this house because it was not being recognized. There is so much history to it and every time I dig more into the history there is more and more to it.

Richard Stankus: You have gone over and above with your historic restoration. We have seen many folks come before us and it is always a pleasure to have someone like you to put your time and effort into a historic house. I applaud you and your efforts and thank you for everything that you do.

Paul McDonald: Agrees. I worked at the Seward house for years and always told people that there were two Secretaries of State that lived next to each other. I have sent a lot of people to look at the Dulles house. It has been a local historic landmark for many, many years and really deserves this.

Elizabeth: It has been the warden's house for 80 years and to make it known for more than that is really important.

Andrew Roblee: It is wonderful that someone is coming forward to proactively preserve their property. We need people that are preservation minded. I think that for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, adding another landmark would be a feather in the cap. This is a unique house with different elements of style. Are the properties in the Historic District eligible for historic tax credits?

Michael Deming: Yes, when you are in the Historic District you are on the National Register as an individual building.

Elizabeth Koenig: June 11<sup>th</sup> is the ribbon cutting. The Dulles' are excited. James Dulles Seymour is coming from Hong Kong and his sister Marion is coming from Santa Fe New Mexico and the third in line to the CIA is coming to cut the ribbon.

Michael Deming suggests inviting someone from the Auburn theological seminary. The Dulles house was owned by reverend Dulles. It is in New York City. There is a real religious connection with the house.

Chair closes public to be heard.

### **Certificates of Appropriateness**

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

### **Other Matters:**

#### **a. 67 South Street Local Landmark**

Christina Selvek: Staff is happy to introduce the first request for local landmark status here in Auburn in the last 16 years. The Historic Resources Review Board has powers under City Code section 178-3 that gives the board the ability to designate local landmarks or districts. Within the code are the criteria for local landmarks within local districts. The letter that the board received from Mr. and Mrs. Koenig did outline 6 out of the 10 criteria for a local landmark. The property is only required to meet one of the following criteria.

- (1) Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, the state or the nation;
- (2) Is the site of a significant historic event;
- (3) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community;
- (4) Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (5) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or engineering specimen;
- (6) Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of Auburn, the state, or the nation;
- (7) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;
- (8) Is part of or related to a park, cemetery or other distinctive landscape which reflects the historic heritage of the City;
- (9) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established or familiar scenic landscape feature of the City, state or nation; or
- (10) Is included on the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the United States Secretary of the Interior.

Christina Selvek outlines the criteria listed in the applicant's letter:

- The property owner met the first criteria with heritage and cultural characteristics.
- The applicant also met the third criteria and the association with the numerous prominent families from the Woodruffs to the Humphries, the Dulles and the connection with Auburn Theological Society really does exemplify meeting that criteria.
- Criteria number four is met through the craftsman architectural style in which the property owner outlined.
- The property was designed by Amasa Curtis who was an architect in the 1830's / 1840's and has designed other historic homes in the City of Auburn and therefore meets criteria number six.
- For criteria seven, there are a number of pocket doors throughout the home that have a unique counter weight pulley system. The servant bell system is an electromagnetic call system and still exists in the home.
- Criteria ten. The property is included on the Registry of Historic Places and is verified as the property is a contributing feature in the South Street Historic District. The USN number and the RN number were provided to the board.

The board's responsibility on this request, if the board would like to move the application forward, is to hold a public hearing within the next 30 days. This could be held at our next board meeting. If upon the public hearing the board disagrees with the application the process would cease but if there is agreement with the application, it would move forward by going to the Planning Board and to City Council for final authorization for the local landmark status.

I do not have a written motion but am looking for a motion for staff to move forward with a public hearing designating this property for local landmark status.

Richard Stankus makes a motion to move this application for local landmark status on to our next board meeting for a public hearing. Second made by Andrew Roblee.

Richard Stankus: if we approve this after the public hearing, is it stamped by the Planning Board? Does someone have to be there to answer questions, is there going to be a public to be heard?

Christina Selvek: Staff would write a report to Planning Board and City Council. We would file for approval in concurrence with each of those Boards following the April meeting.

Michael Deming questions why the Planning Board has to review the application.

Christina Selvek: It is written in the code that within 30 days of the designation by the Historic Resources Review Board the Planning Board shall file a report in relation to the designation to City Council. It has to do with our connection with the Zoning Code and the municipal code about public improvements and any other plans projected for renewal in those areas.

Michael Deming: We have not given this to anyone in the district before but if a property wanted to apply to be on the National Register this is what they would do because the house would be added to the ordinance. This house is already in it.

Christina Selvek contacted New York State Historic Preservation Office and the local designation is at our own discretion so the State does not have any approval or disapproval process. We currently have six local landmarks already but none of those are in our Historic District. Being in the Historic District does not preclude or entitle them from having local landmark status.

Michael Deming: This normally goes to Planning because you are adding someone to the ordinance but her house is already covered by the ordinance because it is in the Historic District.

Christina Selvek: The local landmark status goes with the property so it would essentially change its use. That is how the ordinance is written. There are new guidelines on local preservation ordinances from the New York State Preservation Office. It has been a long time since we reviewed our ordinance and it may be time to provide updates.

Christina Selvek: As part of the public hearing there is public notification, which will have to go out March 11<sup>th</sup> for the April 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Those who are notified will have the opportunity to come to the public hearing and be heard on the local designations. The public hearing will be April 12<sup>th</sup> and if the board votes that evening the application would then move onto Planning Board and City Council. I will clarify if this is just communication to the Planning Board or if it is a formal agenda item.

Michael Deming asks for a vote on the public hearing. All vote in favor of the public hearing.

### **b. Planning for the 25 Anniversary Celebration of South Street Historic District**

City staff reached out to Billye Chabot, Director of the Seward House offered to collaborate on the celebration and offerd Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> or Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> during the First Friday events. City staff also reached out to the National Park Service inviting them to speak about the potential plans for Harriet Tubman National Park. I am waiting for confirmation on if either date works for them.

Richard Stankus- Is the City going to send personal invitations?

Christina Selvek- I would like to ask the board how they would like to move forward with inviting the public.

Richard Stankus offers to help compose the invitation.

Andrew Roblee- It might be a good idea to reach out to the public and remind them of this board and what we do here. I am referring to people in the public that may be part of the district and may not even know that they can designate their property. In my eyes there are dozens around the City including the police and fire station. Any citizen can nominate a property.

Michael Deming agrees and is wondering why the police and fire station was not on the agenda and dicusses a request to nominate the police and fire station.

Christina Selvek- The owner, which is the City, has to sign the documents for the National Register nomination paperwork. City staff presented this to the City manager and Corporation Counsel however since the property is an active building in a request for proposals the decision was not to move forward.

Andrew Roblee- If a property is determined to be National Register eligible; it would still have all the protections that a National Registered listed property would.

Christina Selvek- This property at 23 Market Street and 46 North Street is National Register eligible. It has been determined that by State Historical Preservation Office. If the property was ever to change hands and there was work being done that would trigger review, they would have to go to State Historic Preservation Office for approval.

Michael Deming- Would that get turned over to us since we are a Certified Local Government?

Christina Selvek- Eligible properties do not have to come before the board. We have been bringing eligible city properties before the board because it sets a good example to the community.

Michael Deming- I think there should have been written communication to this board about request regarding the fire and police station. I would like to request this is an agenda item for the next meeting and that the board has a written reply from the City manager.

Motion for written communication from the City Manager regarding the request from Historic Resources Review Board to nominate the Police and Fire Station to be on the National Register made by Andrew Roblee, second made by Richard Stankus.

Andrew Roblee- I have a question related to the new Preservation Ordinance. Does the ordinance require us to change the protections or fines for properties- it is a \$250 fine now.

Michael Deming- Our ordinance was drafted from Ithaca's ordinance.

Andrew Roblee- Are there State mandated changes?

Christina Selvek is not sure but will look into it.

Andrew Roblee- Going back to the public being informed about who we are. Would it be appropriate for one of the board members to talk to City Council during public to be heard informing them of who we are and what we do.

Linda Frank- Prior to the June event we should advertise through the Citizen and explain who we are and if they have questions they can contact us.

Christina Selvek- May is National Historic Preservation month and if our event is in June we can do a precursor of the event at a May Council meeting and explain the National Register.

Michael Deming- We should ask Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to do a feature in their newsletter and ask City Council for a budget for the event.

Richard Stankus- CPC is a quarterly newsletter and it goes to thousands of people. Suggests coordinating with their newsletter.

Andrew Roblee- We can also look at Cayuga Museum and Seward House newsletters.

### **Additional Items:**

Michael Deming- All the houses in the district are a local landmark. When someone applies for Local Landmark status they are asking us to do something different. It was not clear what was before us tonight and what we are supposed to do. Local Landmark status was for the property on Franklin Street that is eligible. The Planning Board or Council may not want the property (Franklin St. example) in the ordinance and that is why it goes in front of them. This house (67

South St.) is already in the ordinance so nothing changes. It has all the protections since it is in the South Street Historic District already.

Linda Frank- Maybe all she wants is to say that the house is a local landmark.

Christina Selvek-City Staff discussed this with the property owners and they originally wanted National Landmark Status but the process is very lengthy and formal. Local historic landmark and local register districts are very different than National Register or State Register districts or properties. This really has to do with Auburn and meeting the criteria that the board has set and is it significant to the history of Auburn. In the ordinance there are local historic landmarks, there are six of them, and there is also the local historic district on Grover St. These are identified as local historic properties related to just Auburn's history. South Street Historic area is on the National Register and State Register of Historic places. None of the properties have local designations according to our ordinance.

Michael Deming states that something different should be done in cases like this.

Christina Selvek says that the Board could discuss designating South Street as a Local Historic District. It could be put in the ordinance and would take a couple of work sessions. It would be an amendment to the ordinance.

Michael Deming would like Corporation Counsel involved.

The next regular scheduled meeting is Tuesday, April 13<sup>h</sup> at 7pm. Motion to adjourn made by Richard Stankus, seconded by Paul McDonald. Meeting adjourned.

*Recorded by Renee Jensen*