

CHATHAM BOROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

September 18, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Chairman James Greener called this Regular Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall. Mr. Greener read aloud the following notice:

Pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by including same in the Annual Notice, copies of which were posted on the official bulletin board on the main floor of Borough Hall, emailed to the Chatham Courier, the Daily Record, and the office of the Borough Clerk.

Names	Present	Absent
James J. Greener (Chrmn.)	X	
Mindy Pitonyak	X	
Frank Truilo	X	
Eleanor Smith		X
Catherine Chin	X	
Carolyn Dempsey		X
Council Member Thaddeus Kobylarz	X	
Liz Holler – Minutes Secretary	X	

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Mr. Truilo made a motion to adopt the minutes of the July 17, 2018 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Mrs. Pitonyak seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Discussion Items

Presentation of Concepts for 44 Fairmount Avenue

Chrmn. Greener informed Commissioners that what is being presented tonight is not an actual application. It is a concept. The Driscoll family has an idea of what to do with the property at 44 Fairmount Avenue and would like to hear feedback from the Commission.

Chrmn. Greener distributed hand-outs to Commissioners from the Driscolls.

The following were present to discuss this concept: Patrick Driscoll, Susan Driscoll and Jack Raker, their architect. Mr. Raker is with the architectural firm of Minno & Wasko.

Mr. Raker explained the aerial photo of 44 Fairmount Avenue and its immediate neighbors on lower Fairmount Avenue. The Driscolls had asked him to create a residential project for 44

Fairmount Avenue. The structure was to be appropriate in scale and accommodate the commuters who use the Chatham train station.

Mr. Raker said an attempt was made to create a narrow street-face for this structure. This building will be L-shaped. The garage level will be 80% buried. Most of the exposed portion of the garage will be towards the back, looking towards the train station. This project will involve quite a bit of grade change for Fairmount Avenue.

Mr. Raker gave details on the parking arrangements for the structure. For the residential units, the floor heights would measure 10 ft. 8 inches floor to floor with a nine-foot clear ceiling.

Mr. Truilo asked about the fourth floor which looked partial to him.

Mr. Raker agreed that it was partial; however, the elevator would be able to reach that floor. Some amenities could be added on that floor so residents could enjoy the roof area.

Mr. Raker stated that he has tried to maintain a residential feel by making the windows smaller. A balconette and a bay window will be installed to also maintain this residential feel. Mr. Raker felt that this building could serve as a transition from the Municipal Building to the downtown area.

Mr. Truilo asked if, from the Lum Avenue athletic field looking east, would the building be perceived as three stories or four stories?

Mr. Raker explained how the perceptions would be different at various corners of the building.

Mr. Greener asked what the zoning was for this property.

Mr. Raker answered single-family.

Mr. Greener asked what made this concept read as a multi-family structure.

Mr. Raker answered the closeness of the Chatham train station and the downtown. He pointed out the current lack of housing in the downtown area.

Mr. Driscoll pointed out that the Borough had approached his company about the town's COAH obligations. The Borough had asked the Driscolls to consider designating some of their properties for affordable housing. There would be affordable housing units in this proposed structure. There would be a total of 24 residential units in this structure.

Mr. Truilo asked the Driscolls if an attempt was made to acquire the existing residential structure (48 Fairmount Ave.) to the south of their property.

Mr. Driscoll answered yes. An offer was made to the residents next door however the terms could not be met.

Mr. Truilo felt that a bulk variance, as well as a use variance would be needed if this concept became an actual zoning application.

Chrmn. Greener and Mrs. Pitonyak had concerns about the massing of this building. Chrmn. Greener suggested that the massing be set back more. He felt there was also a setback issue. Chrmn. Greener felt the architecture of the building was very attractive; however, its context is troubling. Mr. Truilo made some suggestions to resolve the setback concerns.

Mr. Raker brought up that the current commuter parking lot may not always be a parking lot. Eventually this lot may be developed into something else.

Chrmn. Greener agreed with Mr. Raker's point. The future for the train station parking lot is not known; however, the Commission has to consider what exists right now. Chrmn. Greener felt that the massing, scale, and the setback were major concerns for this structure. Council Member Kobylarz pointed out that this building is in the Historic District.

Chrmn. Greener stated that the Commission is supportive of development. Sound ideas are needed from developers in order to invigorate our Main Street.

Chrmn. Greener asked if these would be rental or condo units.

Mr. Driscoll answered that they would be all rental units. These units will be made durable and will hold up over the test of time. These rental units would be good for empty-nesters. Mr. Driscoll pointed out that many of his tenants have chosen to live instead in Summit, Madison, Maplewood, Morristown, because Chatham Borough doesn't have luxury units for people to rent. Mr. Driscoll noted that Chatham's Main Street doesn't have the pedestrian traffic it once had.

Chrmn. Greener agreed with Mr. Driscoll's views about development on Main Street; however, the Commission must be sensitive to the fact that this property is in the Historic District. Chrmn. Greener, speaking for himself, felt it was a beautifully designed building. However, he felt that the massing for the building was a little too strong and the front setback is problematic.

Mr. Truilo pointed out that the façade of the proposed building fits well with nearby Borough Hall. He also liked the multi-family aspect; however, the bulk of the building may be a little out of scale with the surrounding structures.

Mrs. Chin felt that the residential area really begins after the Municipal Building and Fish & Game. She believed that the proposed building would be viewed as part of the downtown. Also, the height of the proposed building may block the view of train station parking lot some, which may be a good move.

Chrmn. Greener said if this concept were to move on, as a possible application, an architect may want to create a streetscape for this site.

Mrs. Pitonyak had concerns about the front yard setback.

Summing up, Chrmn. Greener hoped that the front setback and the massing issue could be reconciled somehow. Mr. Raker felt it would be a challenge to reduce the mass of the building.

Chrmn. Greener wished the Driscolls and Mr. Raker well. They were welcome to return to the Commission for any future discussions.

The Driscolls and Mr. Raker thanked the Commissioners for their feedback. They departed from the meeting.

Discussion regarding improvements to 283 Main Street

Chrmn. Greener noted that the owners are not prepared to give their presentation tonight.

Proposed Ordinance Changes

Chrmn. Greener reported that he has sent Council Member Kobylarz a red-line draft of the HPC ordinance.

Council Member Kobylarz said he will pass this draft on to the Borough officials involved with this ordinance change.

Electronic Update to Historic Guidelines

Chrmn. Greener reported, unfortunately, the Commission will not have an intern to help with this update.

Chrmn. Greener suggested Commissioners focus on the original Guidelines. He asked if Commissioners could take updated photos of the sites mentioned in the old Guidelines. He also needed someone to review the word document of the original guidelines to correct mis-spellings and grammar errors. Chrmn. Greener pointed out that updated information is needed on the types of awnings and signages that are being proposed these days, and other issues that were not existing when the old guidelines were organized. This matter will be re-visited at a future meeting.

Commissioners briefly discussed the new paint job on the Wolfe Annex building (from Taste of Asia to Charley's Aunt Restaurant). Unfortunately, the HPC was not consulted about this change of color. Better communications could be held with the Madison Construction Office and the Borough Zoning Office about certain changes.

At 8:51 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Historic Preservation Commission will be held on Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Room 212, middle level, Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary