

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH**  
**30 North Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**November 19, 2024**

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Mary Baum, David Coats, Jack Davis, George Ford, Eric Holtermann, Katrina Homel, Natalie Shivers, Nadine Stern, Kaitlyn Macellaro

Absent: Robert Chandler, Yasmine Zein

Mr. Holtermann announced that Yasmine Zein's term is up at the end of the year and to let him know if anyone is interested in joining the Commission. Ms. Shivers asked if there are any qualifications for the position. Mr. Holtermann stated that it is a C position and they just need to be a resident of Pennington Borough.

**I. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC ADDRESS (15 MINUTES)**

Mr. Holtermann asked if there was any member of the public who had joined the meeting and had comments on items not on the agenda. There being no member of the public wanting to comment, the open period for public comment period was closed.

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Ms. Homel made a motion to approve the September 18, 2024 minutes and were seconded by Ms. Baum. All were in favor via voice vote.

**III. APPLICATIONS**

**Schematic Design Presentation Follow Up: Clarke Caton Hintz- New Porch at Old Main-The Pennington School**

Mr. Holtermann shared that he sent out some drawings from Clarke Caton Hintz to the Commission. He also sent out a letter that he wrote to the Planning Board and the letter and drawings he received back from Michael Nelson. He noted that in Mr. Nelson's letter, there were more traditional options for column and pier that will be used. Mr. Nelson stated that he sent an updated site plan that shows all of the walkways to remain in red and the proposed new walkways that are part of the Master Plan that may come sometime in the future. Ms. Shivers asked if we could request an updated elevation. She stated that the changes seem positive, but she wants to see them in context. Mr. Holtermann suggested that he will circulate the updated elevation to the Commission to ask for additional comments once he receives it from Michael Nelson. Ms. Shivers asked if we can just email our comments or if we have to wait until our next meeting. Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Homel if you can reply all or if you have to only reply to him. Ms. Homel referred to Ms. Macellaro for the guidance she has been given from the Borough. Ms. Macellaro stated that you should only reply to him and then circulate it to the Commission. Ms. Stern asked what the next steps are in this project. Mr. Holtermann replied and said that this is a development application and would need to go in front of the Planning Board to get approval. Ms. Macellaro announced that she can put them on the agenda for December.

**Minor Work Application Follow Up: 15-17 North Main Street, including Styleworthy; Applicants Carl Fucello and Philip Dillon**

Mr. Holtermann shared a photo of 15-17 North Main Street. He noted that they installed new windows and they stripped the Tyvek off to expose the underlying wood siding. He reminded them to match the original trim that is around the front door when they replace the windows. He announced that the applicant wrote to him asking if there were any limitations on color and that they may have a potential buyer. He let the applicant know that if they plan on adding any shutters, there are no other limitations. Mr. Holtermann stated that the windows that were installed comply with the certificate of appropriateness. Ms. Shivers asked if they were keeping the wood siding. Mr. Holtermann clarified that the contractor said to replace it with smooth hardie plank was too expensive and it would cost less to keep the wood siding. He stated that the applicant said that they will be replacing the back siding with something else and the Commission has nothing to say about that because it is not in the public view.

#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Holtermann stated that he received an email from Ms. Macellaro today about 120 South Main Street regarding a grave stone in the backyard. He noted that they want to know if there is a body that goes with this grave stone before putting it up on the market. Mr. Davis stated that this was shown to him fifteen years ago, but he doesn't remember the conclusion of it. Mr. Holtermann thought that this may be a Blackwell gravestone. He said that he is going to take a photograph of it tomorrow and send it to Mr. Davis to look further into it.

##### **A. Borough Master Plan: Historic Preservation Element-**

Mr. Holtermann shared the element draft and asked if anyone from the Commission had any comments. He stated that Mr. Ford wrote the impact statements for all six sections. He noted that Mr. Jackson suggested that we move general goals and objectives and specific recommendations to number two in the contents rather than number seven and eight. Ms. Baum said that she has some minor edits with punctuation and questions about abbreviations that were not defined that she will send over to Mr. Holtermann separately. Ms. Shivers added that she also has some minor edits that she will send over. She stated that on page five, section three, we should take out the two historic crossroads and just make it historic crossroads. She observed that there are many references to the Pennington Historic Commission as opposed to the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Holtermann said he was going to make those changes. Mr. Davis suggested that we say Historic Preservation Commission once and then say HPC throughout the element. Ms. Homel asked if they would address the multi-story housing in the housing section. Mr. Holtermann agreed and said that there are new guidelines already that new construction does not have to mimic historic architecture, but it needs to respect the character of the building. Ms. Stern confirmed that multi-story housing is something that the Borough is discussing. She asked if the Commission would be open to increasing the height of buildings in the historic area as long as it continues to preserve the appearance and style of the property. She explained how it ties in with Pennington's stance and interest in extending affordable housing. She stated that loosening our height restriction while preserving the downtown look and feel of Pennington could be complimentary. Mr. Holtermann agreed with the intent of housing, especially affordable housing and the increase in density and height, but only to a certain extent. He stated that there are historic places that are recognized to be harmed by the introduction of buildings that are too tall in those districts. Ms. Homel asked where the development is going because Pennington Crossroads Historic District is almost fully developed. Ms. Stern stated that she didn't have a particular building in mind, but wondered if any historic buildings can have a story added to it to provide additional housing opportunities. Mr. Holtermann stated he has seen in

other towns where a developer can buy a building that is contributing, but not significant and build onto it. Mr. Davis asked if the architecture in the downtown is compatible with the size of the buildings. Ms. Baum asked if this is something that can be addressed by considering exceptions rather than changing the overall parameters within which would work. She explained that there are not many plots of land that are available for development and this might come up on a case to case basis. Ms. Stern agreed and asked if we should be more direct in stating that we would be open to entertaining creative suggestions that maintain our historic value, but give us opportunities to do things that would increase our available housing or improve the mechanisms for attracting businesses. Ms. Shivers stated that she thought that the Master Plan element had that flavor already. Mr. Holtermann noted that he thinks we should say that the point of the Historic Preservation Commission is not to be resistant towards those things, but to encourage growth that is careful and appropriate. Mr. Holtermann asked Mr. Ford how he feels about adding another paragraph that addresses this. Ms. Shivers stated that it might be a good idea for Ms. Stern to start on this since it is her idea, but to be careful with how we approach this because downtown has already lost some important structures. Mr. Holtermann also said that he will write out some thoughts to share with Ms. Stern. Mr. Ford asked if we have a building height to setback ratio. Mr. Holtermann stated that he doesn't think there is in the commercial area, but for the residential zone, it is limited to thirty-five feet. Ms. Baum said that she knows there is a limit to both because of a couple of incidents in the Borough. Mr. Holtermann explained that throughout the historic district is a forty foot front yard setback, but not a single house has it. He stated that the Planning Board and the Historic Preservation Commission came to an agreement to allow an average of the setbacks to the houses to the right and left. He stated that the Zoning Board has adopted several of the Commission's recommendations in the last decade. He encouraged everyone to read through the element again and to send any comments to him. He said that the next steps will be to send this to the Planning Board for their review and approval.

#### **B. Planning Board: Areas in Need of Redevelopment-**

Mr. Holtermann announced that there was a redevelopment meeting about the landfill site. He stated that it was a good first meeting with comments made and everyone learned a little bit more about what's really going on with that site. He noted that there will be a meeting about the Blackwell property coming up and it has significant impact on the historic district along North Main Street adjacent to the existing Blackwell house and the barn in the back corner of that site. Ms. Stern mentioned that there are two more properties that are in the process of being areas in need of redevelopment, the old Wells Fargo bank property and 12 North Main Street. She stated that 12 North Main Street already has an owner who wants to develop it into a housing development with a fair percentage of affordable housing. Mr. Holtermann said that it is an interesting opportunity and it is an ideal place for something taller to be built.

#### **C. Ordinance Revision Update-**

Mr. Holtermann stated that he will follow up with the Borough attorney on this. Ms. Stern reported that the ordinance was discussed at Council and referred to the Planning Board to ensure consistency. She stated that the Planning Board has moved it forward and it will probably be adopted at the next Council meeting. Mr. Holtermann asked Ms. Stern if he should attend the next Council meeting and Ms. Stern said that he is more than welcome to in case anyone has a question. Ms. Macellaro announced that the next Council meeting will be December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**D. Bethel AME Church-**

Mr. Holtermann stated that the new owner is in the building and intends to use it for residential use. He noted that he told them that it needs to be discussed with the Historic Commission first if there are going to be any exterior changes. Mr. Holtermann asked if they submitted a building permit yet. Ms. Macellaro reported that the new owners talked to the Construction Department today and had a few questions for them regarding building permits. She stated that they filled out a zoning permit to change it to a residential use as per the zoning officer. Mr. Holtermann noted that the mother of the owner called and asked if the people associated with the church wanted any of the church belongings left behind.

**E. Borough Webpage: HPC Introductory info, further discussion**

Mr. Holtermann noted that it looks like all the agendas have been updated. He asked Ms. Macellaro if she needs anything from him to get up to speed and stated that he has minutes and agendas from 2010. Ms. Macellaro explained that the minutes and the agendas on the website only go as far back as 2022 since the new update. Ms. Stern specified that the website that Ms. Macellaro is referring to is MuniCode. She explained that the Municode site started in 2022 and there is a link to access minutes and agendas after 2022. She stated that somebody at the last meeting wanted it to say agendas and minutes in the box on the webpage. She spoke to Ms. Macellaro today and stated that Ms. Sterling has put in a ticket to the vendor to get it changed. Mr. Holtermann noted that there has been tremendous progress on the availability of information on the webpage over the past year. He stated that if anyone notices anything that needs attention to email him and Ms. Macellaro.

**F. Preservation NJ Events:**

- **PNJ/HPC Round Table: Historic Preservation Master Planning, 10:00am, Saturday, November 30, 2024**

Mr. Holtermann stated that this event is particularly relevant to the Historic Preservation Commission. He noted that he isn't sure if it is in person or on Zoom.

- **PNJ/HPC Round Table: Preventing Demolition and Adaptive Reuse Strategies, 7:00pm, Tuesday December 10, 2024**

Mr. Holtermann described how this is targeted specifically to the Historic Preservation Commission with valuable information. He stated that all of this information can be found on the Preservation New Jersey's webpage.

Mr. Holtermann stated that we typically do not have a meeting in December unless there is an application.

**Adjournment 8:30 PM**