

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT KATJANA BALLANTYNE MAYOR

TOM GALLIGANI, JR ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Eric Parkes, Chair Robin Kelly, Vice-Chair Ryan Falvey Dick Bauer Denis (DJ) Chagnon (Alt.)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, September 06, 2022

Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting on <u>Tuesday, September 06, 2022</u> at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of these proceedings can be accessed at any time using the registration link at the top of this agenda.

Meeting called to order at 6:55 p.m. by Chair Parkes Members present: Eric Parkes (Chair), Robin Kelly (Vice-Chair), Ryan Falvey, Dick Bauer

Staff present: Wendy Sczechowicz, Sarah White

Others present: Anne Vigorito, Christopher Vance, Melissa Woods, Evan Stellman, Katie Osella, Lynn Gerbins, Nathaniel Reynolds, John Hecker, Barbara Magnum.





I. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

1. 722 Broadway

- Attorney Anne Vigorito and Christopher Vance were present for the Applicant team.
- Preservation Staff reminded the commission that all items for the night were not public hearing items and so public comment was not required.
- Attorney Anne Vigorito presented the project and the agreement that was negotiated with Staff. Included in the MOA are that exterior and interior images shall be provided, the building will be constructed as depicted in the plan set, and interpretive signage will be installed with size, text and images being determined with Preservation Staff.
- Architect Christopher Vance reviewed the proposed plan set for 722 Broadway. The building was constructed to look like two separate buildings on 720 and 722 Broadway but is actually one building.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **accept** the Memorandum of Agreement.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

2. 17 Allen Street

- Attorney Anne Vigorito, and Evan Stellman, architect, were representing the Applicant team
- Evan Stellman and Anne reviewed the proposed plans which include a 4-story structure with brick and steel detailing.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the scale of the building does not match the streetscape, but there is some movement and interest in the design which is nice for passing pedestrians.
- Mr. Bauer did not like the proposed design of the building; he stated that he felt that it looked like two buildings pushed together.
- Mr. Falvey liked the glass and brick in the façade design and thought it would fit onto the street fine.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted (3-1), with Mr. Bauer dissenting, to **accept** the Memorandum of Agreement.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: no; Eric Parkes: yes

II. CPA- HPC Advisory Review Items

1. 90 Union Square

- The Applicant was Melissa Woods, Director of Capital Projects
- Preservation Staff noted to the Commission that the property required a vote of historic significance and any guidance the Commission would like to provide the applicant on their project.
- The Applicant, Melissa Woods, explained that they have started the application for CPA funding for 90 Union Sq. They wanted funding to restore the historic cupola on the tower. The restoration of the cupola was also included in the neighborhood plan for Union Square.





- Chair Parkes stated he believed that the building was historically significant as it contributed to union square. Vice Chair Kelly agreed with Chair Parkes stating it retained its original details, retained its original location and massing, and had a long history of civic uses.
- Mr. Falvey believed the matter was clear and wanted a vote brought.
- Preservation Staff clarified that no findings are required like in a demolition vote.
- Mr. Bauer made a motion to determine the building historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the determination that the building is historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

- For advice, Chair Parkes said the issue was mainly to build back what was there previously and that there are several old photographs that the Applicant should consult for what the building used to look like. He also requested that the clock is made operable again. Furthermore, he noted that the window in the tower is also modern and should be brought back as part of the project.
- Preservation Staff said that they would share photos of the original windows with Director Woods regarding the window.
- Vice Chair Kelly said that whoever is doing the work should be a preservation specialist as opposed to someone who is accustomed to working on modern construction.
- Chair Parkes would also like to see the roof of the cupola matched to slate, that repointing is done, and general masonry repair work be done.
- Vice Chair Kelly made the motion to move froward the recommendations as outlined in the discussion.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations outlined in the discussion.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

2. 277 Broadway (Elizabeth-Peabody house)

- The applicant was Katie Osella.
- Preservation Staff noted that the building had previously been voted historically significant in the past, so the Commission only needed to vote on advice to the applicant.
- The applicant provided a presentation on their request to replace and repair their windows as needed on the first and second floor.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that they want anyone who will be doing the proposed work will need to be done by a qualified specialists with relevant expertise.
- The applicant confirmed that their consultant has a lot of experience with historic resources and has worked on the subject property on other projects.
- Chair Parkes agreed with Vice Chair Kelly's note on using someone with expertise to do this work.





- Staff stated that the applicant should amend their ask to install windows that are period appropriate windows, such as 6/6 wood windows with true divided lites, as 1/1 double hung windows would not have been used on a building of this period.
- The applicant replied that they wanted to restore everything as best as possible and were working with historians and the Somerville Museum to find older photos and drawings to best restore the building.
- Staff suggested to the Commission to make the motion as they did for the last item.
- Mr. Bauer made a motion to make the recommendations as outlined in discussion.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously, (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations as outlined in the discussion.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

3. 81 Broadway (Mudflat Studios)

- The applicant was Lynn Gerbins.
- The applicant requested CPA funds to do a feasibility study and structural assessment of the front façade.
- Staff provided the HPC with photos showing how the elevation had been altered over time.
- The applicant gave a presentation of the conditions of the façade and some of the degradation. They also noted that the proposed funding would just be to work with an engineering firm to understand the extent of the damage that would need to be repaired.
- Vice Chair Kelly noted that the building retains its original form and massing, and though some changes have occurred, it largely retains original architectural details.
- Vice Chair Kelly moved to find the building historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously, (4-0) to **approve** the determination that the building is historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

- Chair Parkes stated that for advice his only comment was that any assessment done be by someone with relevant expertise and that the goal should not just be making the facade weathertight but also to restore the original grandeur of the front façade whether in phases or all at once.
- The applicant confirmed that their intention was not just making the façade weathertight but to restore those architectural details.
- Mr. Falvey agreed with Chair Parkes.
- Vice Chair Kelly suggested that the applicant should also look at the restoration of the marquee during this process and see if that can be done as the next project.
- Preservation Planning staff recommended that since the applicant has found portions of the original facade, that they should let the engineer know that and have them keep that in mind as that may change the report and overall project.
- Vice Chair Kelly made the motion to make the recommendations as outlined in discussion.





HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously, (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations as outlined in the discussion.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

4. <u>396 – 398 Broadway</u>

- The applicant did not appear for this item. Preservation staff proceeded to give an overview of the item. It is a privately owned structure, and the applicant was seeking funds to do structural work on the building.
- The Commission did not vote on this item as the Applicant was not present.

5. 73 Concord Avenue (carriage barn)

- The Applicant was Nathanial Reynolds.
- Preservation Staff reviewed the history of the structure. The property previously came in for demolition review and was declared historically significant and preferably preserved. The then owner of the property signed into an MOA stating that they would preserve the carriage barn and confirmed an approved exterior design for the carriage barn. In 2020 or 2021 new homeowners bought the building and met with staff on converting the plans into another unit. Since that meeting, those plans have not moved forward.
- The applicant then reviewed for the HPC the structural issues with the carriage house. The roof had become compromised which had caused additional issues with the siding, doors, and second story floor. The applicant had put a tarp on the roof and some additional shingling to prevent further water damage. The applicant stated that they engaged Structural North from Salem to create a structural engineer's report.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the applicant's path to attain additional information is the correct next step. The Vice Chair continued that if the building is at risk of collapsing additional measures need to be taken to ensure the building does not affect anyone else and asked if Preservation Staff had additional information on this.
- Preservation Staff replied that it is every property owner's responsibility to secure their building.
- Chair Parkes agreed that the structural assessment is the first step. The Chair also noted that the applicant needed to concentrate on shoring up the property to keep it standing before concentrating on a plan to create an additional living unit. The Chair continued that he had concern that the applicant wanted to use CPA money on creating an additional unit in the carriage barn.
- The applicant replied that the funding request is only to keep the building standing as it is too expensive to convert the barn into living space.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated the only real advice they can give at this point is getting a feasibility study to determine what steps are next to stabilize the building.
- Vice Chair Kelly made the motion to make the recommendations as outlined in discussion.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations as outlined in the discussion.





Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

6. **59 Cross Street**

- Architect John Hecker was representing the Applicant.
- Property was a designated structure so does not need a vote of historic significance.
- The applicant reviewed the scope of work: restoration of stained and non-stained-glass windows, restoration of copper gutters, on the right elevation looking from Cross Street design historically appropriate roofs or canopies over two side entrances, restoration or replacement of entry doors on the right elevation, and construction of interior elevator with potential overrun. The applicant stated that the project is over one million dollars.
- Planning Staff summarized the Applicant's asks and stated that plans will be needed to show the overrun for the elevator.
- The applicant clarified that there had been changes to the elevator code and so they needed to investigate those changes before they could create plans for the elevators.
- The applicant also noted that their plan also included, on the right elevation, removing the granite slabs and building cheek walls along the stairs to make the stairs safer.
- Mr. Bauer commended the applicant's project scope.
- Chair Parkes also found the planned restoration very exciting and found the different types of stained-glass windows on the building fascinating.
- Preservation Staff noted that there is a new tenant in part of the building that had
 previously applied to replace windows with vinyl windows and that is how this project
 came up. Staff continued that it is important that Preservation Staff as well as Roberta
 Cameron, the Applicant, and the new tenant all meet to discuss the project and get on the
 same page.
- Chair Parkes commented that he would like to see documentation for all the stained-glass windows and the doors. The applicant confirmed that that will be done but it will take time to look at each window.
- Chair Parkes also stated that the Commission will want to see the work done by someone with expertise in historic stained-glass, which according to the Applicant's presentation appeared to be the applicant's plan.
- Vice Chair Kelly questioned what the advice is that the Commission is providing. Chair Parkes agreed that the applicant already plans on using experts in the restoration which would have been their only advice.
- The applicant noted that they will also make sure to keep Planning Staff in the loop as decisions are made and the project proceeds to make sure everything is done correctly.
- Preservation Staff stated that constant communication by the applicant with staff was
 important as this is a multi-track process both with the HPC and the CPC. Additionally,
 the applicant will first go before the HPC informally for advice, but then will be
 submitting a formal application later for the work. This could be the advice that the
 Commission provides; "ensure that Planning Staff, Sarah White and Wendy
 Sczechowicz, are kept in the loop along with Roberta Cameron", and to work with Staff.
- The applicant followed up by noting that Staff has been very helpful with such things as making the deadlines such as the Oct 5th deadline to submit an application for the CPC.
- Vice Chair Kelly made a motion that the Commission vote to recommend that the applicant move forward with the recommendations and plans as discussed.





HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations and plans as outlined in the discussion.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

7. <u>1 Westwood Road (Somerville Museum)</u>

- Barbara Magnum was present for the Applicant team.
- Preservation Staff summarized the requests being made by the Applicant. The first item was the restoration of four paintings with direct ties to Somerville. The HPC needed to determine the paintings historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding. Combined with the paintings, is the 18th century Bulfinch staircase, the staircase was already under a preservation restriction by a previous round of CPA funding; however, the staircase would still need to be determined historically significant for the purpose of CPA funding. The next request was to do a feasibility study for fire suppression and climate control systems, and the renovation of the attic space to house said systems. For this last request the HPC needed to provide advice.
- Preservation Staff further explained that the attic restoration could not be covered by CPA funding, but the feasibility study could. The last request was for funds for a parttime/temporary Collections Manager. This last item would need advice from the HPC. Staff recommended that the HPC recommend the applicant have a set plan and a set schedule for what they want the Collections Manager to concentrate on first.
- The Applicant reviewed the subject paintings that they would like to have restored. Two of the paintings were a Portrait of Mary Elizabeth Sawyer Tyler (of Mary had a Little Lamb) and the companion Portrait of Columbus Tyler. This couple lived on Central Street in Somerville.
- The next painting was 'Portrait of Mrs. Eunice G Gilmore' from 1877. She was the daughter of John Gilmore who lived in Union Square and was a descendant of James Miller. The Somerville Museum received this piece because Eunice G Gilmore left in her will, \$2,000 to build the Somerville Museum building. The piece had water damage.
- The last painting was 'Portrait of Mayor Glines', the eleventh Mayor of Somerville. He was also a state representative, state senator, and on the Common Council of Somerville for several years. The painting had a yellow cast on it as well as some water damage.
- The applicant then reviewed the request for the Charles Bulfinch Staircase. Charles Bulfinch was a wealthy merchant in Boston who owned the Barrell Mansion. The paint on the staircase was chipping, with one layer being lead paint, one of the balusters was broken and needed repair, but because of how it was built that to repair the baluster the applicant would need to take out that entire section.
- Going into discussion, Chair Parkes clarified that the HPC would vote on historic significance for the paintings in one vote, and the staircase in a second vote.
- Chair Parkes believed that all items described thus far seemed historically significant to him.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the paintings had strong ties to Somerville and its history so preserving them made sense. The Bulfinch Staircase had its own prominent place in Somerville history, so it was clear to her that it was significant.
- Mr. Falvey agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair and fully supported a significance vote.
- Vice Chair Kelly made a motion to declare the paintings historically significant for the purpose of CPA funding.





HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the determination that the four paintings are historically significant for the purposes of CPA funding.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

• Vice Chair Kelly made a motion to declare the Bulfinch Staircase historically significant for the purpose of CPC funding.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the determination that the Bulfinch Staircase is historically significant for purposes of CPA funding.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

- Vice Chair Kelly asked the Commission for advice to provide the applicant. Chair Parkes believed that he could not provide advice as he did not have knowledge of painting conservation. The Chair asked the applicant if they had a painting conservator. The applicant replied that a painting conservator had already been retained for this project.
- Vice Chair Kelly recommended that the applicant stay in contact with Preservation Staff about any updates, especially regarding the staircase.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the HPC should include Preservation Staff' recommendation that the Collection's Manager have a very specific project is to tackle and that information be provided for consideration.
- The applicant responded that they are having over 3,000 collection items returned and not all have been inventoried. So, the Collection's Manager would be inventorying and stabilizing the objects prior to entering the new storage. To do this, the Collections Manager would be working with volunteers to do this, but it would be a stage-by-stage process.
- Preservation Staff responded that based on the applicant's clarification that if the HPC
 wanted to include advice on keeping staff updated regarding the staircase, having the
 Collections Manager follow standard museum protocol for the work that they are doing,
 and any additional insight regarding the fire suppression and climate control study that
 the Commission do it all in one vote on advice.
- Chair Parkes did not have additional advice on the fire suppressant and climate change system study but did agree that the applicant needs to pursue the feasibility study and that that be included in the advice.
- Vice Chair Kelly made a motion to recommend that the Applicant move forward with the recommendations on those four subjects.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the recommendations as outlined in the discussion.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

III. Other Business

• Staff Approvals





o Replacement of anachronistic materials or building elements

- Planner Sarah White explained that Staff would like to be able to approve work that removes later (but not historic) elements from a house such as mid-to-late 20th century iron railings and restore that element back to something closer to what would have been there originally.
- Mr. Bauer and Vice Chair Kelly stated their agreement with this change.
- Chair Parkes was worried that there could be unforeseen issues such as an applicant removing vinyl wood siding and finding original wood siding underneath. Staff noted that such things would go before the board, and that Staff would always refer work that effects historic materials to the Commission.

Installation of solar panels

Planning Staff reviewed the request to be able to approve installation of solar panels at Staff level. Staff noted that in the last 8 years no request to install solar panels had been denied by the HPC. Additionally, Staff knew what the Commission routinely conditions on these approvals. Staff would refer applications to the Commission if there were an issue of slate tile removal, or if applicants don't agree to the conditions (hiding mechanicals in the rear, painting mechanicals to match the surrounding walls, etc.) then staff would have the application go before the Commission for review.

Installation of mechanicals, including AC compressors and heat pumps.

Planning Staff reviewed the request to be able to approve the installation of these items at Staff level. Staff would condition CAs so that screening would be required, that no conduits or piping would be allowed on the front façade and require any exterior conduits or piping would be wrapped to match the surface it is against. If an applicant did not want to comply with any of these requirements Staff would refer the application to the Commission for review.

• Allow for Preservation Planning Staff to determine changes to previously approved projects to be "minor" in nature and sign off on such changes.

- Planning Staff explained that this issue came up on a recent project where an applicant had recently received approval for windows. In the HPC's approval they conditioned that the window frames be a certain color (either black or white) saying it would match the surrounding windows within that rowhouse. The applicant later contacted Staff to say that the window frames along the rowhouses were 50% black and 50% white and because of that if they could choose the alternative color. Staff explained that they would like to be able to approve changes in which it can be reasonably assumed that a regular member of the public walking by would not notice. Staff would issue a minor change memo for these and have the Applicant upload that into Citizenserve.
- Vice Chair Kelly requested that the Commission receive a monthly list of all Staff level reviews, because the Commission should be aware of what is happening in the City.
- Planning Staff said that they can provide a report on a monthly basis, or bimonthly basis.
- Chair Parkes wanted to receive these lists for at least awhile to see how the staff approvals discussed are handled and if the Commission would want to adjust the permissions for staff approvals. He also noted that he remembers years ago that they used to receive a list of all Staff approvals on each agenda.





- Mr. Falvey would be interested in that list; however, believed it should only be twice a year. That way the HPC can get real analytics of approvals, demos, etc. over the years.
- Vice Chair Kelly believed these are two different things she wanted to see just a list of approvals whereas Mr. Falvey wanted high-level trends over the years.
- Planning Staff stated that both can be accomplished; a monthly report of staff approvals, and a 6-month report showing trends.
- The Commission stated that they were okay with this Staff approval so long as they receive the monthly list of Staff approvals and the 6-month trend report.
- Allow for Preservation Planning Staff to approve changes to existing asphalt roofing materials
 - Preservation Staff reviewed that, currently, if applicants want to change from a 3tab asphalt shingle to an architectural shingle it requires Commission review which Staff believes is a minor enough change that it should be approved at Staff
 - Chair Parkes noted that he thought that Staff already approved this. Preservation Staff clarified that they have only been able to review in-kind changes.
 - Mr. Bauer stated that he is fine with this change.
- Vice Chair Kelly made a motion to approve the new staff level approvals in conjunction with a quarterly summary of cases approved by staff.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** the new staff level approvals in conjunction with a quarterly summary of cases approved by staff.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

• HPC Minutes – June 21st

- o Vice Chair Kelly and Mr. Bauer noted that they were not present at this meeting.
- o Planning Staff confirmed that a commissioner did not need to have attended the meeting to vote on minutes.
- o Mr. Bauer's only note was that sometimes the PDF title is incorrect but that was fixed for the July minutes.
- o Vice Chair Kelly noted that Chair Parkes name sometimes has an 'e' sometimes doesn't.
- o Mr. Falvey made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes with the correction of Chair Parkes name.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Falvey, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted (3-0-1), with Mr. Bauer abstaining, to **approve** the 21 June 2022 meeting minutes, with edits.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

• HPC Minutes – July 21st

The Commission noted inconsistencies in the spellings of Vice Chair Kelly and Chair Parkes' names





- o The attendance list of Commissioners did not match the noted individuals in the Commission who voted on certain items.
- The Commission requested that the minutes be sent back to be cleaned up before coming back again for approval.

IV. Adjournment

• Motion to adjourn and roll call vote.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **adjourn** the meeting.

Roll call vote: Robin Kelly: yes; Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

Meeting was adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Please see cases at https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases. As cases may be continued to a later date, please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email historic@somervillema.gov to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. Interested persons may provide spoken remarks to the Historic Preservation Commission at the virtual public hearing or via e-mail to historic@somervillema.gov. All written comments historic@somervillema.gov. All written comments <a href="https://must-remarks-to-the-late-of-the-l



