



# MINUTES

Thursday, December 17, 2015  
7:30 pm @ Hightstown-East Windsor  
Historical Society



Historic Preservation  
Commission

### Call to order:

Chairman Pratt called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

**Open Public Meeting Act Statement:** Rick Pratt read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

### Roll Call:

Commissioner Cardoso (PC):	Present	Commissioner Egan (DE):	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner Carney (WC):	<i>Absent</i>	Commissioner: Honsel (JH):	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner Pratt (RP):	Present	Commissioner, Mair (JM) Alt. #1:	Present
Commissioner Teller (RT):	Present	Commissioner, White (KW) Alt. #2	<i>Absent</i>
Commissioner von Riegen (RvR):	Present		

Council Liaison C. Montferrat (CM): Present      Planning Bd. Liaison F. Montferrat (FM): *Absent*

**Minutes:** November, 19 2015 minutes were moved by RT, 2<sup>nd</sup> by RvR approved unanimously.

**Guests:** Doug Mair – See Public Comment below.

**Correspondence:** 172 Stockton Street has been purchased by Jack and Kathy Price. They reached out to see if we had any history on the house. RP forwarded their request to Bob Craig, but he knew nothing more than they already had. RP invited them to the HPC meeting, but they were not available, but will try to attend another time.

### Opinion Requests:

176 Stockton Street – Barbara Walker. On 12/15/15 RP received an Opinion Request form from the Construction Official to replace the roof shingles with Certainteed, Landmark Series dimensional shingles. However, the work had already been completed. The CO will be issuing the roofing company a fine for proceeding without a permit. The Commissioners reviewed the request and the shingle style. “Landmark” unfortunately mimics cedar shake shingles rather than the slate that was once original to the house. If the HPC had reviewed the Request prior to installation, we would have recommended either “Hatteras” or “Highland Slate” by the same manufacturer. These two styles mimic slate. On Opinion response will be issued to this affect.

Later in the meeting in discussion regarding the Secretary of the Interior Standards, the roof shingles are considered non-detrimental to the bones of the house. They could be replaced at a later time with shingles that more closely mimic slate.

238 South Main Street: Through the Construction Official, Peddie requested an Opinion regarding replacement of rotting porch decking, stairs, handrails and trim. “All replaced or repaired components will be custom made to match existing profile and materials to keep the authenticity of this house.” The Opinion of the HPC is that this is “ordinary maintenance.” However, one of the Commissioners noted that one or two porch columns were also replaced. This will need further investigation.

*Post Meeting: RP walked past 238 South Main on 12/20/15. There are two temporary columns in place of the historic columns. Therefore, the application is no longer ordinary Maintenance. On 12/21/15, RP emailed the construction department of this fact.*

### **Old Business:**

#### Certified Local Government:

On Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, there was a lunch meeting with Andrea Tingey from the SHPO; George Chin, the Construction Official; Tamara Lee, the Borough Planner; Fred Montferrat, the Planning Board chairman; and Rick Pratt, HPC Chairman. The meeting was to discuss changes that the Planner and the Borough Attorney, (not in attendance) would like made to the present edits that the SHPO wanted made. In the end, the group decided that the present ordinance should be scrapped, and a new ordinance be written based on an existing ordinance from another CLG town.

Next steps: The Planning Board will have a work session with a representative from the SHPO to learn more about the required ingredients of an HPC ordinance, including the difference between a “weak” and “strong” commission. After that there will be a combined Planning Board/Council/public workshop to determine whether the Hightstown ordinance should be weak or strong, and any other clarifications.

RP stated that it’s important that the Borough Government and the public understand that the proposed changes are being driven by the SHPO and not by individual commissioners.

Historic District Descriptive Sign: Commissioner Honsel passed around a shortened draft. Mr. Carney who was the latest commissioner to review the language was not able to attend the meeting. JH and WC to review and report back at the next meeting. WC and JH will look into the status.

Preserve America Sign Placement. RP brought the sign to the meeting to show the Commissioners. The HPC decided that for now it should stay at the Historical Society for safe keeping.

Image Imbedded Database. RP took pictures from the east end of the historic district to 220 Stockton Street and mocked out a database file. The Commissioners reviewed it. The layout remains up in the air. As of now, only two images fit on a page and the final document will be unwieldy.

### **Public Comment:**

Doug Mair. (Paraphrasing...) Mr. Mair began by saying that many of his concerns had been resolved by listening in on the Commissioners discussions during the meeting, but that he would like to mention a few things. He had been concerned about 238 South Main Street but the discussion resolved that. He understands better now what is HPC’s purview and what is not. He feels that rendering an Opinion on 238 Main Street after the fact serves no purpose.

He thinks that the entire Commission should attend all Planning Board/Council meetings where the new ordinance will be discussed.

He said that a resident (who wanted to remain anonymous) approached him regarding a Stockton Street residence. That the HPC had threatened the owner with a \$500/day fine if the Opinion was not followed. He wanted to know if that was the same tactic for 238 South Main Street. If residents have to adhere to the Opinion, the Peddie should too.

*At the meeting, RP clarified that no one on the HPC threatened the homeowner or anyone else with a fine. – Post Meeting: One 12/18/15 by speaking with the Stockton Street resident, RP found out that the homeowner had no idea what Mr. Mair was referring to. There was a notice placed on the front door of the house by the construction department, stating that if the notice was removed, there would be a (one time) \$500 fine. The homeowner stated that no one from*

*the HPC or construction department threatened him with a fine. RP spoke to Mr. Mair 12/18/15 to relay this factual information.*

Mr. Mair was also glad that [RP] petitioned the Planning Board regarding the proposed ordinance changes. He had his own concerns until he heard [RP] say what the role of the HPC is, and what should / [may] become part of the ordinance.

He thinks that the HPC should put out a flyer with a simplified version of the ordinance to make it clear what the HPC does and can do, and what they don't and can't. "To show people that you aren't mean." Right now, a lot of residents are up in arms about the ordinance and what they think will happen if their house is placed in a district.

Lastly, he feels that selling an historic home is a disadvantage as the pool of potential homebuyers is limited who want to live in a house on the National Register or in a District.

*RP noted that according to the SHPO there is documented evidence that the opposite is true and that he would recommend that they discuss that at the Planning Board workshop.*

**New Business:**

HPC Logo: RP replaced the present "logo" on the agenda with the stencil to discuss. However it was not discussed. This is not a high priority, but entirely to generate discussion at this point.

Downtown Design Guidelines: RP passed around two guideline booklets for information. The Planning Board endorsed the guidelines at their December meeting. The document will not be required to be adhered to until ordinances are written referring to it.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was moved for adjournment by RT, 2<sup>nd</sup> by RvR at 8:45 pm.

**Next Meeting:** January, 21 2016 – 7:30pm, HEWHS