

Village of Skaneateles  
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission  
January 9, 2013

Present: Patricia Blackler, Chairman, HLPC  
Dave Neibert, Member  
Andrew Ramsgard, Member  
Mona Smalley, Member  
Carol Young, Member

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Historical Commission

James Lanning, Village Trustee  
Chad Rogers, Skaneateles

Absent: Katharine Dyson, Member  
Ted Kinder, Member  
Karlene Miller, Member  
Beverly White, Member

Chairman Blackler began the meeting by explaining her continued presence on the Commission. At the request of the Village Board of Trustees, Trustee Mary Sennett met with Chairman Blackler, requesting her to remain as Interim Chairman and a Member of the Commission until April 2013. The Village Board makes its annual appointments for one-year terms -- for all Boards -- at its April organizational meeting. Consequently the Village Board thought it would be "unfair" to appoint someone now for just 3 months. Chairman Blackler agreed to serve in this capacity, as requested.

Chairman Blackler continued that she would be sending a letter to the Village Board recommending that Member Ramsgard be appointed Chairman. Members Dyson, Miller and White have indicated that they would like to co-sign that recommendation.

Chairman Blackler expressed hope that Robert Eggleston, Architect for the redevelopment of 46 East Genesee Street, will bring forward the colors, material specifications and samples of materials at the February meeting of the Commission. These are the requirements to receive a Certificate of Approval as specified in the motion adopted at the Commission's December 19, 2012 meeting. Mr. Dundon noted that the project is before the Village Board for Critical Impact Permit on January 10. Chairman Blackler indicated that she would not be present at the regularly scheduled March meeting, due to a planned travel commitment.

Chairman Blackler proceeded to recap the process followed in the 46 East Genesee Street project. After much prior discussion and several fundamental changes, at its December 6, 2012 meeting the Planning Board recommended that the ZBA approve the variances required for the

project and that the Village Board of Trustees grant the Critical Impact Permit. The Zoning Board of Appeals met on January 2, 2013, in a Public Hearing, at which meeting Member John Crompt made a motion to accept the application based on the plans dated December 12, 2012, and granting two years for completion of construction. The motion was approved. Chairman Blackler noted that those were the same plans that were before HLPC. The Planning Board met again on January 3, 2013 and approved the Site Plan on a motion by Member Doug Sutherland. Next is the previously noted approval of Critical Impact and then back to HLPC for the final Certificate of Approval.

Chairman Blackler noted that she had some disagreement with Mr. Eggleston's characterization of the HLPC's action as "concept approval", since the Commission's attorney, Mr. Galbato, had advised her to avoid approvals-in-concept. Mr. Dundon noted that regardless of how Mr. Eggleston may have characterized the Commission's action, the minutes are clear as to the action taken and that it was an approval of drawings dated December 12, 2012 and conditioned upon further action by the applicant. She also objected to Mr. Eggleston's comment that he had constructed the model "because HLPC was having a hard time understanding".

Chairman Blackler then read the motion that was adopted at the December 19, 2012 meeting on a vote of 5-2-1, that referenced the drawings of December 12, 2012 and was "without prejudice to the appropriateness of the materials of the skylight" and contingent on further submissions to be made by the applicant. She noted that the HLPC will be the last approval.

Member Ramsgard outlined a procedure in which a project within the Historic District would come first to the HLPC for review and "schematic approval". It would then go to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals, where they would be expecting design development to have been completed. Ultimately, the final approval of the Certificate of Approval by HLPC would occur just prior to finalization of all the construction documents – by which time all material choices should have been made and colors, specifications and samples obtained for submission to HLPC. The Commission was in general agreement that this represents a good procedure.

The members discussed how to make this standard procedure. Most felt that it needed to be shared with and approved by the Board of Trustees. It was suggested that the Commission write a letter to the Trustees outlining the need for a project to come before HLPC first, and requesting that the item be placed on the Village Board agenda for discussion at some future meeting, likely after April. Member Ramsgard recognizes that the Commission is dealing with a relatively small Historic District and that the Planning Board also has design standards oversight for the Downtown D district. As a result the HLPC processes are a layer of regulation on top of the Planning Board's responsibilities – arguing for the HLPC approvals coming first in the progress of an application. The CEO can play a role in this process by helping to sensitize the applicants as to the roles of the various Boards in the early stages of discussion, perhaps using a checklist that outlines the process.

The Commission also expressed that regular attendance of an HLPC representative at Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings would be beneficial, at least if a project within the District is on the agenda. Member Ramsgard described the Town's approach, which is to have

the Chair of the Planning Board and ZBA attend the other Board's meetings. Also the Town has in place a regular staff meeting of the Chairs of the PB and ZBA along with the CEO to solve coordination issues and provide a communications forum.

There was uniform agreement that the handling of the 46 East Genesee Street project represented a best-practices demonstration of coordination, consideration, deference and communication – culminating in all three Boards (PB, ZBA & HLPC) and the Trustees considering and approving the same set of drawings. The difficulty came with 11<sup>th</sup>-hour submissions; the members feel that those should be considered, but not acted upon, without sufficient time to review and investigate.

Chairman Blackler raised the necessity and desirability of Mr. Galbato's regular attendance at HLPC meetings. The Commission feels that his attendance on contentious issues would be in order. The Chairman also discussed the fact that the CEO is responsible for ensuring that the "in-progress" and "as-built" results match the approvals given by the Commission, in order to avoid another Lakeview House type situation. The revised language in the Certificate of Approval advises the applicant that adherence is required. Member Ramsgard suggested that the Commission receive dimensioned record documents, such as elevations, and good photo-documentation for the files to avoid ambiguity.

Chairman Blackler and Member Ramsgard introduced the question of proper handling of same-day submittals. The Commission feels that they should not be considered for immediate action. The first meeting regarding an application should be a Commission discussion of the project and an evaluation of the completeness and adequacy of the application. At such point that the application is complete and ready for action, then the Public Hearing can be scheduled and action taken on a Certificate of Approval. The Commission is more than willing to having a pre-application meeting with a potential applicant to provide input.

Chairman Blackler said that she believes that the Commission should meet every month, regardless of whether or not there is a Public Hearing. This provides a venue for pre-application discussions and administrative discussion. Discussion ensued about the difference between a Public Hearing and an open meeting -- which is publicized on the Village calendar, has an agenda, and is open for public attendance but is not required to accept public comment.

Trustee Lanning expressed his own and the Village Board's appreciation for "all of the time, effort and energy that you contribute on the Village's behalf. The Village is better off for the oversight that you show on the community." The Commission thanked him and expressed their appreciation of Trustee Lanning's regular participation in its meetings.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to HLPC