

**BOROUGH OF MENDHAM
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 2020
REGULAR MEETING**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Mr. Zedalis at 7:30 p.m. electronically via Zoom.

OPENING STATEMENT

Notice of this meeting was published in the *Star Ledger* and the *Daily Record* on in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and was posted on the bulletin board of the Phoenix House. The meeting is being conducted electronically, with Notice as required, consistent with the Governor's Emergency Declarations and the guidance issued by the NJ Department of Community Affairs along with limited seating at the Garabrant Center.

ATTENDANCE

Mr. Zedalis – Present
Mr. Encin – Present
Mr. Van Arsdale – Present
Ms. Reilly – Present
Mr. Maresca- Alternate I – Present
Ms. Shafran – Alternate II – Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Zedalis asked for comments on the minutes of the regular meeting of June 15, 2020. There being no corrections, Ms. Shafran made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Ms. Reilly seconded.

ROLL CALL

In Favor: Mr. Zedalis, Ms. Reilly, Mr. Van Arsdale, Mr. Encin, Mr. Maresca, and Ms. Shafran
Opposed:
Abstain:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Zedalis opened the meeting to the public for questions and comments on items not included on the agenda. There being none, the public session was closed.

APPLICATIONS:

- **App. #08-20 (Demolition)**
Harrington Recycling Co., Inc (12 West Main St.)
Block 1902, Lot 2
Present: Catherine Elkins, Daughter of Owner

Ms. Elkins read a letter dated August 11, 2020 that she had written regarding the property at 12 West Main St. which summarized the condition of the property.

ACV Investors Associates LP
August 11, 2020

Dear Mendham Borough,

I am appearing before the board as President of ACV Investors Associates LP, a limited liability company qualified to do business in the state of New Jersey; however, I am also the daughter of Robert Elkins Esq. who practiced law at 12 W Main St for 20+ years. This building is presently under a contract for demolition.

When my father passed away in September 2015, we put the building back on the market for sale. From that date to the present time, the only offers received were considerably less than its appraised value. Furthermore, all of the offers had multiple contingencies which would further compromise the possibility of its sale.

We investigated the possibility of rehabbing the building and bringing it to a state that would be a credit to both the family and the community, while also making the building financially viable. We retained the services of a qualified architect who drew plans for its restoration. After the plans were completed, we put the project out for bids. When the estimates came in, it became obvious the project made little financial sense since the costs far outweighed its commercial value.

After again failing to secure a meaningful offer for the property and acknowledging the present deteriorated state of the building, we reluctantly decided the building in its present condition was unsafe and therefore we had a decision to make – Either we board the property until a purchaser comes along or we demolish the building immediately.

At considerable cost we made the decision to demolish the property and hold the land in inventory for future sale. We entered into a contract with Harrington Recycling Co, which provided for the complete demolition of the building with grading so the land was suitable for landscaping. Harrington proceeded with securing the necessary approvals from the state with regard to asbestos removal and applied for a permit for the demolition which was then referred to your Board for final approval. After an initial meeting, your board requested the property be placed in a condition after demolition that would be aesthetically pleasing to the community and recommended a number of improvements. As directed, we retained the services of a qualified landscape architect who submitted a plan to remediate the property for your approval.

After submission your Board responded with some further requests which I investigated as to costs and likely benefits to the property. We considered the possibility of sodding the property and was told that it would be a waste of money since the sod would die without proper irrigation. We then investigated the repair and/or removal of the driveways to make the land more attractive and again we were confronted by substantial costs which would have very little value to a future purchaser.

Furthermore the rights to these driveways and curb cuts might be of value to future developers so their removal could affect the property value in the future.

The costs for demolition are now exceeding \$50,000 and we may have to abandon this course of action and simply secure the property and to protect it from being in an attractive nuisance or a potential haven for young people and homeless.

For these reasons I respectfully request that your permit us to proceed with the demolition and on the plans as previously submitted.

Thank you for your consideration,

*Catherine Elkins
President, ACV Investors Associates LP*

Mr. Zedalis explained that the purpose of the landscaping was meant to make the property not look like an abandoned piece of land.

Mr. VanArsdale asked the meaning of putting the property "in Inventory" that was stated in her letter. Ms. Elkin stated that the plan was to demolish the building and put the property up for sale. Ms. Elkin explained that the property with the building on it has been on the market numerous times to no avail. Ms. Elkin felt that as it stands is a hazard and would not make financial sense to renovating the building.

Mr. Zedalis questioned the previously submitted landscape plan asking where the tree line was in relation to the building that is there. Ms. Elkin stated that the tree line was behind the existing building

After discussion, applicant was asked to supply a landscape plan showing the bushes in front of the building removed, grass planted from the sidewalk 8-10 ft and a row of 4-6 ft. Spruce trees from driveway to driveway.

This application is being carried to the September 21, 2020 meeting with owners' consent, awaiting landscape plans.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional business, Ms. Reilly made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Van Arsdale seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor. Mr. Zedalis adjourned the meeting at 8:40PM.

The next meeting of the HPC will be held on Monday, September 21, 2020 at 7:30PM at the Garabrant Center, 4 Wilson Street, Mendham, NJ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Smith

Lisa Smith
Land Use Coordinator