

# CHATHAM BOROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

January 17, 2023

7:30 p.m.

Commissioner James Greener called this Reorganization and Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission at 7:30 p.m. This meeting was held in Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building.

Names	Present	Absent
James Greener	X	
Council Member Dempsey	X	
Council Member Frank Truilo	X	
Lynn Magrane	X	
Karen Franklin	X	
H.H. Montague	X	
Justin Strickland	X	
Brigid McMenamin	X	
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary	X	

## Public Comments

There was none.

## Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Council Member Truilo made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2022 HPC meeting. Mrs. Magrane seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes of December 20, 2022 were approved.

## Discussion Items

### New Signage for the Exxon Station – 258 Main Street

The representatives from Exxon were not present tonight. Council Member Truilo reviewed his discussion with the Borough Zoning Officer about this sign. He noted that the digital pricing part of the sign is internally illuminated, which, technically the Borough Zoning ordinance does not allow. The desire is to have all signs downtown externally illuminated.

Council Member Truilo liked the idea of Exxon's proposal to combine two signs, the Exxon sign and the pricing sign, into one sign.

## Administration of Oath of Office

Brigid McMenamin was sworn in as a new Commissioner of the Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission. The HPC warmly welcomes Mrs. McMenamin.

## 110 Main Street – Sign Application

Mr. Greener showed Commissioner a drawing of the proposed sign for the Tiger Cub School which is planning to open in the older building next to Dunkin Donuts. It will be a free-standing sign. Council Member Truilo didn't notice any illumination on the sign. It probably would not be needed for a building that operates only during school hours.

Mr. Greener noted that there will be two other signs on the property – one at the back door and a double-sided sign on the fence in the parking lot. Answering a Commissioner’s inquiry about the size of the sign, Mr. Greener noted that the Borough Sign Committee decides on the size of a sign, not the HPC.

Mr. Strickland asked if there were any rules regarding images on signs.

Mr. Greener didn’t know of any rules. Council Member Truilo felt that certain logos were permitted on business signs.

Mr. Montague felt this sign may be a little too bright. Maybe it could be softened.

Council Member Truilo suggested the HPC could recommend a white background, instead of yellow, for the sign.

After further discussion, Council Member Truilo suggested that an off-white color be used for the background for the free-standing sign. The Tiger Cub lettering could remain in orange. Council Member Truilo felt the orange would stand out better on a white background. The image of the tiger cub could stay.

Mr. Strickland felt a sign with Council Member Truilo’s suggestions would blend well with Dunkin Donuts next door.

Summing up, Mr. Greener will forward the HPC’s comments on to the Borough Sign Committee.

#### Resolution #23-01

#### Resolution of the Borough of Chatham – Historic Preservation Commission

#### Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair for the Year 2023

Council Member Truilo made a motion to nominate James Greener as Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission for 2023. Mrs. Magrane seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners voted aye. Mr. Greener was unanimously re-elected as Chair of the HPC for the year 2023.

Council Member Truilo made a motion to nominate Lynn Magrane as Vice Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission for 2023. Mr. Strickland seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners voted aye. Mrs. Magrane was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the HPC for the year 2023.

#### HPC Ordinances

Chrmn. Greener distributed copies of the proposed changes to the HPC ordinances. He felt the new Commissioners would be interested in this recent project. Mr. Greener explained that he and other Commissioners felt that these ordinances, in their original form, contained some deficits. Some “food for thought” language has been discussed by the HPC. The HPC doesn’t expect that 100% of this revised language would be accepted by the Borough officials. Chrmn. Greener noted

that an identification has to be made of the gap currently existing in the ordinance, and what needs to be done to make the HPC's operations actually function.

Chrmn. Greener explained that there is no mechanism in place to alert the HPC of construction projects, in the Borough's Historic District, that are submitted to the Madison Construction Office. The Madison Building Department is not familiar with the Chatham Borough Historic District. The Chatham HPC wants to review construction applications, including paint jobs, that are being proposed in the Historic District. Chrmn. Greener explained to the new Commissioners that the HPC would like "fresh air" given to these particular ordinances, so the HPC can function more effectively. Unfortunately, some construction applications have recently slid by without any review by the HPC.

Chrmn. Greener noted that help could be asked of the Madison Building Dept. to help streamline this process with applications.

Council Member Dempsey questioned whether new paint jobs needed to be reviewed by the HPC. Chrmn. Greener felt a paint job review could be encouraged. Council Member Dempsey asked whether the owners of the Historic District buildings would be made aware of consulting with the HPC on new paint jobs. Chrmn. Greener noted that progress had been made on this situation by putting the Historic District Guidelines on the web site.

Council Member Truilo pointed out that the Chatham Zoning Officer, Glen Turi, would really be "the gatekeeper" when Borough permits are being filed in the Madison Building Department. Council Member Truilo felt that construction permits in the Historic District should be directed to the HPC,

Chrmn. Greener reported that Mr. Turi would like the permit review process to be streamlined for minor applications.

Related to this topic, the HPC discussed the progress being made restoring the Chatham Sandwich Shop, Sunnywoods Florist, and the former Les Cheveux store unit.

Chrmn. Greener noted that the Sandwich Shop seems to be only repair what had been damaged in the fire, what had previously existed. No major changes are being done. However, if a whole new look was being proposed, the HPC should be allowed to review and possibly give some suggestions to the storeowners.

Summing up, Council Member Truilo felt that anything like that being changed in the Historic District should come before the HPC first.

Chrmn. Greener stated, that at the same time, the HPC should be "pro business". The HPC does not want to lose any businesses in town.

Mr. Montague recalled that in his years of serving on the Planning Board and Zoning Board, proposed paint jobs were never asked about. Maybe they should have been reviewed because of how a paint color influences the aesthetics of the building.

Mr. Strickland went up to the Chatham historic map in the meeting room. He had observed some of the older homes, 100 plus years old, getting purchased by developers who tear these historic homes down and re-build. At what point, could the HPC possibly stipulate if a home is X number of years old, it cannot be torn down.

Chrmn. Greener noted that several years ago, the idea of “tagging” houses of a certain age had been discussed. The idea was to have certain allowances be made to the zoning regulations for these historic homes if they seriously needed to expand. Chrmn. Greener felt the Mayor and Council may be open to this idea. He wasn’t sure what the Borough Planning and Zoning Board would think of it.

Mr. Montague shared his observations of the recent tear-downs and re-builds happening in his neighborhood, Dellwood Avenue.

Chrmn. Greener and Council Member Truilo further discussed this idea of tagging historic houses to obtain certain zoning relief. This would help make these older homes more sustainable. Council Member Truilo suggested “zoning bonuses” be given to the historic homes. Each case would have to be reviewed individually. These bonuses could be sort of a reward for the effort to maintain a historic home rather than tearing it down.

Chrmn. Greener asked Council Member Dempsey how could the HPC feel out town leaders about this tagging idea.

Council Member Dempsey advised that the Boough Attorney should be consulted.

On other matters, Council Member Truilo reported that the Zoning Board of Adjustment has met some ambiguities on architects and homeowners proposing 2 ½ stories to their homes. At times, these proposals could be construed as 3 stories instead. A subcommittee will be formed with representatives from both the Planning Board and Zoning Board to look at this situation.

#### HPC Flag Award

Council Member Dempsey reported on the progress made on a candidate home on Fairmount Avenue.

At 8:44 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler  
Recording Secretary

