



**CITY OF PLAINFIELD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION**
515 WATCHUNG AVENUE, ROOM 202
PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060
Phone: (908) 753-3391



Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor

**William H. Michelson, Chairman
Lawrence T. Quirk, Vice Chairman**

**MARCH 22, 2022, VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Call to Order and Public Notice

Chairman Michelson called the virtual meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. and in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act read aloud the following: “In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the annual meeting schedule was published in the Courier-News, and copies of the meeting schedule are posted in the offices of the City Clerk, Planning Division and on the City website. I ask that everyone including Commission members please turn their cell phones to silence or vibrate and not take or send any electronic messages during this meeting.”

Roll Call Attendance

2022 Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission Name, Class Designation (Term Ends)	1/25/22	2/22/22	3/22/22	4/26/22	5/24/22	6/21/22	7/26/22	8/23/22	9/27/22	10/25/22	11/22/22	12/20/22
Mario Camino , Class A (12/31/2024)	X	O	X									
John Favazzo , Class A (12/31/2025)	X	X	X									
William T. Garrett , Class B (12/31/2023)	X	X	X									
Sandra Gurshman , Class B (12/31/2022)	X	X	X									
William H. Michelson , Class B (12/31/2022)	X	X	X									
Lawrence T. Quirk , Class A (12/31/2025)	X	X	X									
Gary F. Schneider , Class C (12/31/2023)	X	O	X									
Reginald Thomas , Class A (12/31/2022)	X	X	X									
Gail Smith Alexander , Class C (12/31/2024)	X	X	X									
Kirk Hemphill , Alternate Member 1 (12/31/2022)	X	X	X									
Alternate 2 (vacant- unexpired term ends 12/31/2020)	na											

Also Present – HPC Consultant Barton Ross, HPC Secretary Maximo Vazquez, Christopher Zingaro, Esq., Commission Counsel

Roll Call Was Taken

Order of Business

Presentation of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the HPC meeting of February 22, 2022 were presented. No questions were asked.

A Motion to adopt the February 22, 2022 minutes was made by Commissioner Alexander and seconded by Commissioner Schneider. They were adopted by unanimous voice vote with Vice Chair Quirk abstaining.

Minutes from the HPC meeting of August 24, 2021 were presented. No questions were asked.

A Motion to adopt the August 24, 2021 minutes was made by Commissioner Alexander and seconded by Commissioner Gurshman. They were adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Old Business

- 1. Hearing #1: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2019-16. Applicant & Owner: Genevieve Joshua, 414 Randolph Road; Block 10, Lot 755. Van Wyck Historic District. Carried from January 25, 2022 Meeting.** Applicant seeks to resurface rear deck and replace existing railings. Additionally, applicant seeks to replace existing shed and vinyl windows.

Chairman Michelson recuses. Vice Chair Quirk takes over the meeting.

Vice Chair Quirk notes that an extension is being sought for this HPC application. He notes that Ms. Joshua would like to install the Lifestyle series of windows manufactured by Pella.

Vice Chair Quirk notes that the extension will run for 2 years from the date of the initial CA, which in this case was January 8, 2020.

Ms. Joshua wishes to use slightly different material, namely aluminum clad wood. Vice Chair Quirk asks where the aluminum would be, to which Ms. Joshua notes the outside of the window would be aluminum, and the inside of the window would be wood.

Mr. Ross notes that at other HPCs, aluminum can be acceptable, however, he expresses concern over the style of the upper sash of the windows, as this would be simulated, not true, divided light.

Motion to extend HPC 2019-16 2 years from the expiration date of the original certificate of appropriateness was made by Vice Chair Quirk and seconded by Commissioner Alexander.

Voice vote taken. Unanimous vote yes, with abstentions from Chairman Michelson and Commissioner Schneider.

Vice Chair Quirk returns the meeting to Chairman Michelson.

2. Hearing #2: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-01 Applicant and Owner Golden Circle Properties, 228-236 East Ninth Street; Block 824, Lots 24, 25 and 26. Crescent Area Historic District.
Applicant seeks to construct two new multi-unit dwellings.

Joseph Paparo, Esq. represents the applicant. He looks to continue the presentation from the February 22 meeting, and has concern over the hour at which the application is being heard. Mr. Paparo recaps the standing of the application from the last meeting presentation.

Jennifer Palermo, architect, makes the presentation, including the changes made.

Vice Chair Quirk clarifies that no new renderings were presented.

Mr. Paparo asks about the building material that would be used, to which Ms. Palermo notes it would be uniform traditional stucco. He also asks if the window bays would come down to the ground, to which Ms. Palermo notes they are low to the ground. He also clarifies that the architect followed the design guidelines of the HPC.

Mr. Paparo notes that the HPC has no jurisdiction over density, dimensions, height or setbacks.

Economic Development Director Valerie Jackson notes that regardless of the HPC vote, the application will go to the Planning Board.

Counsel Zingaro notes that all questions to the HPC should be architectural in nature, and any comments on variances and zoning are not pertinent.

Chairman Michelson disagrees with Counsel Zingaro, as massing and size are pertinent to design, in his opinion.

Counsel Zingaro notes that the CA is pertinent to architectural stylings, and zoning issues are done via referral. Chairman Michelson shows the front page of the application materials to everyone, noting that it is headed "Preliminary and Final Site Plan". Mr. Paparo did not seem to know that the Commission believed site plan issues were before it.

Vice Chair Quirk asks Ms. Palermo if the bays for the windows go to the ground on building A. He asks to clarify what "traditional stucco" entails, to which Ms. Palermo notes it would be cement stucco.

Vice Chair Quirk asks how much further the side bump outs can go, to which Ms. Palermo notes they can be pulled out another foot or two. She agrees to pull out the protrusions as far as possible, without interfering with setbacks.

Vice Chair Quirk asks what decorative elements were removed in the latest revisions, to which Ms. Palermo highlights that building B lost dormers in favor of bays on the front of the building. No other decorative elements were removed from the previous submission.

Vice Chair Quirk asks to clarify the distance between the front door and the furthest projecting bay on the left, to which Ms. Palermo approximates roughly 8 feet from the left bay, and 5 feet from the right bay.

Vice Chair Quirk asks if more can be done to break up the massing, specifically where the doors are, to which Ms. Palermo advises that it would be contingent on the effects of the interior at that point.

Vice Chair Quirk asks about reintroducing two half-moon windows over the standard windows, to which Ms. Palermo obliged.

Vice Chair Quirk communicates concern of the East 9th Street streetscape, and how the mass affects the streetscape design.

Commissioner Hemphill asks if the windows will be wood, to which Ms. Palermo notes that the client is looking for direction on the materials for the windows, specifically for seeking aluminum clad wood. Vice Chair Quirk notes that wood windows were agreed upon last time, to which Ms. Palermo notes that the windows would be better maintained with the aluminum cladding.

Mr. Ross echoes sentiments and recommendations to differentiate the massing in ways that are conducive to fitting in with the neighboring existing structures.

Commissioner Favazzo echoes Mr. Ross's sentiments. He notes specifically that the roofline reads like one building, and could be tweaked to break up the massing further. He expresses that the scale of the building is traditionally considered when evaluating historic character.

Daryl Morgan of 943 Hillside Avenue asks of Ms. Palermo if size and design are relative, to which Ms. Palermo notes that, in her opinion, the size is appropriate.

Richard Sudol of 313 Franklin Place asks Ms. Palermo for a reason why this home has no basement, whereas most other homes are raised 3-4 feet from their basements, to which Ms. Palermo notes that the design is a matter of efficiency.

Gerry Heydt of 915 Madison Avenue notes that in the historic guidelines, scale and mass are pertinent to historic character.

Arne Aakre of 915 Madison Avenue asks if any other buildings nearby are 60 feet wide, to which Ms. Palermo notes there are none. He also asks if the fenestration of the building is appropriate, as against the number of windows in nearby buildings, to which Ms. Palermo notes that this building is wider, and warrants more windows.

Commissioner Schneider expresses that once the building is built, the people who live in the area have to deal with it. He would like more consideration for those who live in the area.

Ms. Jackson asks of the HPC that if no decision is made tonight, that all recommendations be made in writing to the Planning Board for sake of efficiency. Chairman Michelson says that is our practice.

Counsel Zingaro notes that a site plan application has not been made, and recommends that the applicant come back for their Certificate of Appropriateness once the site plan application is filed.

Motion to extend the meeting another 15 minutes made by Vice Chair Quirk at 11:07pm, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, unanimously agreed.

Commissioner Favazzo requests a streetscape drawing, to see how the buildings relate to scale, in context of the full scope of the proposal.

Ms. Jackson asks if Mr. Ross can prepare a list of recommendations for later review.

Commissioner Thomas asks if the applicant can get a permit without a CA, to which Chairman Michelson clarifies they cannot. Commissioner Thomas conveys his sentiments that this be either voted on or tabled.

Counsel Zingaro notes that any recommendations should not be made to the Planning Board before the site plan application is brought to it.

Mr. Paparo notes that the applicant is okay with being carried to the next meeting, for only architectural review.

Motion to carry HPC 2022-01 to the April 26 meeting made by Commissioner Gurshman and seconded by Vice Chair Quirk, to a unanimous vote in favor.

New Business

- 1. Hearing #1: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-08 Applicant and Owner Anvit Dubey, 618 Ravine Road; Block 903 Lot 38. Crescent Area Historic District.** Applicant seeks to construct a new multiunit dwelling.

Name and Address: Vince Chiumento of 618 Ravine Road, appeared for the applicant.

Mr. Chiumento notes he is looking for a CA for fixing the front driveway retaining walls and walkway, enclosing the east and south sides of the house with wooden fences, and to install solar panels on the roof.

Chairman Michelson notes that the general rule for solar panels is that they are not allowed in historic districts.

Commissioner Alexander asks if the solar panels will be able to be seen from Ravine Road or any other rights of way, to which Mr. Chiumento notes that the rear of the house is on a hill, and not likely to be seen from any right of way. Chairman Michelson notes similar findings.

Vice Chair Quirk asks for Mr. Chiumento to describe the extent of the work for the front of the home, to which Mr. Chiumento notes that a tree root lifted the sidewalk and requires it to be fixed. The two retaining walls on either side of the driveway are on the verge of falling in.

Vice Chair Quirk asks for the length of the new walls on the left and right of the driveway, to which Mr. Chiumento notes they would be 6 feet long. They would be the same configuration and size as now.

Vice Chair Quirk asks to clarify which walkways would be fixed, to which Mr. Chiumento notes it is the one immediately in front of the home, from the door to the driveway. The sidewalk on the way to the front door is to be moved 3 feet.

Vice Chair Quirk asks about the portico on the application, to which Mr. Chiumento notes that was the original intent, but is no longer part of the application.

Vice Chair Quirk asks if the windows will remain the same, to which Mr. Chiumento notes they will indeed remain the same, as well as the front bay window.

Vice Chair Quirk asks for Mr. Chiumento to elaborate on the solar panels, to which he replied that the panels would offset the electric consumption by 60%, and would be placed only on the rear (south) roof plane.

Chairman Michelson asks about the shutters, to which Mr. Chiumento notes they are coming down and not replaced, as they are “plastic”.

No further questions or comments from the Commission or the public.

Motion to grant HPC 2022-08 a Certificate of Appropriateness made by Commissioner Favazzo and seconded by Commissioner Thomas.

Voice vote is unanimously in favor.

2. Hearing #2: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-13, Applicant and Owner - City of Plainfield, North Avenue between Park and Watchung Avenues, and Gavett Place, North Avenue Historic District.

Presenting this application is Carlos Fuentes of Pennoni Associates, 24 Commerce Street, Newark NJ, City Engineer, on behalf of the City of Plainfield.

Mr. Fuentes explains the plans in brief – the City would close off and decorate North Avenue between Park and Watchung Avenues, and the southern portion of Gavett Place, a block-long street which intersects it midway between them. He presents a color rendering of the proposal, including milling and paving of the roadway, stormwater management amenities, planter beds, and new sidewalks. Additional amenities include game tables, bicycle racks, a gazebo, and new signage.

Chairman Michelson asks about vehicular access. Mr. Fuentes notes the original plan called for a double swinging gate at each end of North Avenue, but NJDOT would prefer a less permanent barrier. Valerie Jackson, City Economic Development Director, notes that retractable bollards would be the ideal temporary barrier for these intersections.

Commissioner Gurshman asks about the businesses that are currently operating, to which Mr. Fuentes notes the intention is to drive additional pedestrian traffic to this area, to patronize these businesses.

Commissioner Camino asks for clarification on the asphalt pavement’s color, to which Mr. Fuentes notes the plan indicates the epoxy coat is clear, so the asphalt would be the usual black color.

Commissioner Camino asks about the size of the retaining walls, to which Mr. Fuentes notes they are fairly small walls.

Vice Chair Quirk asks how wide the driveable part of the mall would be, to which Mr. Fuentes says it would be 24 feet wide.

Vice Chair Quirk communicates concerns over the flow of traffic for discharge and pick-up of passengers looking to take the train, with the removal of this stretch of road. Ms. Jackson notes that there would be more pedestrian traffic, as a result of new developments downtown. Vice Chair Quirk maintains that most people will continue to drive despite being near transit. He also communicates concern with access for businesses on the Park Avenue side of the proposed plaza, for deliveries.

Chairman Michelson asks if Ms. Jackson has been in communication with NJ Transit, to which Ms. Jackson confirms it is.

Commissioner Thomas asks about what parking will remain, to which Ms. Jackson notes that public parking will remain on Gavett Place, and several nearby parking lots will remain.

Chairman Michelson asks further about deliveries, to which Ms. Jackson notes the deliveries would be made at drop off points, by moving the bollards.

Commissioner Alexander asks about how sanitation would function, to which Ms. Jackson notes that the Director of Public Works is seeking solutions for trash downtown at large, including those within the proposed project area.

Commissioner Schneider asks who would be maintaining the proposed mall's trash and the proposed rain gardens. He also communicates his concern with homelessness around the train station. Ms. Jackson notes that quality of life issues are being addressed holistically, both in the downtown and citywide.

Commissioner Hemphill asks if the materials would match those which are used on Gavett Place, to which Mr. Fuentes notes that the existing improvements on part of Gavett Place were not required to be approved by HPC, and the continuation in the plan would follow a similar design. Mr. Fuentes notes that the concrete would be of the HPC's approved color. Commissioner Hemphill would also like to know if the tree grates could be painted, to which Ms. Jackson notes they can be painted.

Vice Chair Quirk notes that traffic may be an issue with regards to pick up and drop off, in addition to the deliveries for the businesses. He also notes that Somerville's pedestrian mall is successful because of the planned programming. Ms. Jackson acknowledges this and notes plans are being developed by the SID.

Richard Lear of 925 Madison Avenue notes that rain gardens are designed with plants that absorb water. They need to be maintained as they can grow unruly. He notes that gravel may not be best because weeds can grow out of gravel and be difficult to maintain. He also notes that there would not be much of an issue with taxis, in his estimation, with the exception of high traffic times. He supports the idea of turning Gavett Place into a green space. He also expresses that the tunnel between the two sides of the train station needs to be kept clean.

Mary Burgwinkle of 1785 Sleepy Hollow Lane notes that the traffic by the post office is unruly, with little parking. She also notes that trees installed in a previous streetscape project died as a result of lack of

maintenance, and is concerned about DPW staffing. She also expresses concerns about resources devoted to this project from the Police and DPW.

Gerry Heydt of 915 Madison Avenue comments on the rain gardens and the importance of maintaining them. She also comments on the parking and deliveries, specifically the lack of parking that may result in store owners not having a place to park.

Arne Aakre of 915 Madison Avenue asks about the utilities underneath the street, and if the rain gardens would need to be removed for future maintenance. Mr. Fuentes replies that the existing utilities will remain, and the rain gardens would be placed around the utility lines. Mr. Aakre asks how NJ Transit will get access to clean and maintain the station, to which Mr. Fuentes notes that the road will be accessible via the removable bollards, which will be handled by DPW or the Police.

Commissioner Schneider communicates concern over the lack of infrastructure for new projects and developments. Ms. Jackson notes that parking decks are part of the larger parking plan.

Commissioner Thomas notes that walkable downtowns exist near Plainfield, and that this town was historically a walkable community.

Daryl Morgan of 943 Hillside Avenue expresses concerns over the maintenance plans and long-term sustainability of the project.

Motion to carry the case one month, to April 26, made by Vice Chair Quirk and seconded by Commissioner Gurshman. Voice vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Jackson would like written comments on design elements, for consultation with the professionals, between today and next month.

Discussion Items (HPC Awards, Abandoned/Vacant Properties and Redevelopment Plans) were not reached due to the lateness of the hour.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Schneider made a motion for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Thomas. All voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:23P.M.