



**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**

**APRIL 26, 2022 - VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
PLAINFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Call to Order and Public Notice

Chairman Michelson called the virtual meeting to order at 7:38 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	O								
John Favazzo , Class A (12/31/2025)	X	X	X	O								
William T. Garrett , Class B (12/31/2023)	X	X	X	X								
Sandra Gurshman , Class B (12/31/2022)	X	X	X	O								
William H. Michelson , Class B (12/31/2022)	X	X	X	X								
Lawrence T. Quirk , Class A (12/31/2025)	X	X	X	X								
Gary F. Schneider , Class C (12/31/2023)	X	O	X	X								
Reginald Thomas , Class A (12/31/2022)	X	X	X	O								
Gail Smith Alexander , Class C (12/31/2024)	X	X	X	X								
Kirk Hemphill , Alternate Member 1 (12/31/2022)	X	X	X	X								
Alternate 2 (vacant- unexpired term ends 12/31/2020)	na	N a										

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

Presentation of Meeting Minutes

Presentation of March 22, 2022 minutes - no questions.

Motion to adopt minutes made by Commissioner Alexander.

Seconded by Commissioner Schneider.

Voice vote was made with all present in favor.

Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session made by Commissioner Schneider. Motion seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The reason is to award a professional services agreement

Voice vote, all in favor.

Return from executive session. Motion made to recommend Barton Ross to the Plainfield City Council for the CLG Sustainability grant made by Commissioner Alexander.

Seconded by Commissioner Schneider.

Voice vote held with all present in favor.

Chairman Michelson makes the announcement that Commissioner Sandra Gurshman has resigned from the Historic Preservation Commission, as she and her husband are moving out of state.

Motion to recognize Commissioner Sandra Gurshman for her long service and to send her a Resolution from the Commission, expressing gratitude and honor for her commitment to the Commission made by Vice Chairman Quirk.

Seconded by Commissioner Alexander.

Voice vote held with all present in favor.

Chairman Michelson makes an announcement to the public to check on 653 Ravine Road for any potential divergence from approved details that would warrant HPC intervention.

Chairman Michelson requests for a volunteer to join the Architectural Review Committee and explains the use of the ARC to the public.

Counsel Zingaro makes a clarification that the ARC would make determinations that certain applications are not in need of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Vice Chairman Quirk notes that there are frequent occasions where some communications between the ARC and the applicant can save time for the HPC, and for the applicant, in the long run.

No commissioners volunteered for the ARC at this time.

Old Business

- 1. Hearing #1: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-13 Applicant and Owner City of Plainfield, North Avenue from Watchung Avenue to Park Avenue and Gavett Place from East Second Street to North Avenue; Block and Lot NA. North Avenue Historic District.** Applicant seeks to improve existing roadways including milling and paving, reconstruction of handicap ramps and adjacent sidewalks, tree planting, and drainage improvements including the construction of rain gardens.

8:00PM

Carlos Fuentes of Pennoni Associates Consulting Engineers representing the City of Plainfield makes remarks.

Mr. Fuentes requests for the case to be carried to the May 24th, 2022 HPC meeting.

Motion to carry HPC 2022-13 to the May 24, 2022 HPC meeting made by Chairman Michelson.

Commissioner Alexander seconds the motion.
Voice vote is held with all in attendance in favor.

New Business

- 2. Hearing #1: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-05. Applicant and Owner – Plainfield Group, LLC c/o Isaac Sebbag, 141-143 Crescent Avenue; Block 832 Lot 11. Crescent Avenue Historic District.** Applicant seeks to replace windows and repair front porch deck.

8:05PM

Isaac Sebbag, 270 High Street, Passaic New Jersey, principal of LLC appeared.

Mr. Sebbag summarizes his request of the HPC. He notes he replaced the windows without approval from the HPC. He also notes he applied for permits to repair the deck and was informed that HPC approval would be needed for the permit approval.

Chairman Michelson asks if Plainfield Group, LLC is the enterprise that owns the building. Mr. Sebbag notes that is correct, with no partners other than himself.

Chairman Michelson asks about the number of units in the building, to which Mr. Sebbag notes that there are 8 currently, but the city recognizes 6 and the State recognizes 7.

Charlie Tapia, 4 Jersey Street, Harrison, NJ as the architect comes to answer additional questions.

Vice Chairman Quirk recommends that the latticework under the front porch remain solely in between the piers, and retain the diamond shaped look.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the joists and whether they would be covered by the floor, to which Mr. Tapia notes that is correct and clarifies that only about 50% of the porch floor is being replaced.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks how the flooring is to run, to which Mr. Sebbag and Mr. Tapia note it will be parallel to the street, and painted.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks for clarity on the bullnosing for the floor edges. Mr. Tapia clarifies that the floors will not be bullnosed, but the front steps will be cedar wood and bullnosed.

Vice Chairman Quirk expresses confusion about the columns. Mr. Tapia notes that columns were found in the garage and he is looking for them to be reinstalled into the porch.

Vice Chairman Quirk questions the railings on the right side of the porch. Mr. Tapia defers to the HPC for what to do with the rails, but the intent is to scrape and paint the rails and ensure they match.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks if the asphalt roof is what is currently there, with no slate. Mr. Tapia confirms.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the vinyl windows. Mr. Sebbag notes they were installed by a previous contractor. Vice Chairman Quirk notes they will need to be removed and replaced by wood windows. Mr. Sebbag notes that neighbors also have vinyl windows. Vice Chairman Quirk notes again that no vinyl windows are allowed in historic districts. Mr. Sebbag asks if he can keep the vinyl windows on the side of the home and replace the front. Vice Chairman Quirk notes that all windows visible from the street must be of wood.

Mr. Tapia asks what the time frame is to replace the windows. Vice Chairman Quirk notes that, should the applicant provide the specifications for the windows, the HPC would grant the applicant a CA that allows 2 years to replace the windows.

Counsel Zingaro clarifies that the enforcement powers are with the City of Plainfield, and while the CA may be valid for that long, that does not mean the City would not cite violations.

Commissioner Garrett asks what the latticework is made out of. Mr. Tapia explains it is made of treated wood and will remain the same in dimensions and openings.

Commissioner Garrett asks why there is a proposal for pressure treated plywood for the roof, where the applicant explains that they intended to keep it exactly as it was. The HPC prefers beadboard.

Chairman Michelson would like to see the latticework under the stairs to match the porch.

Mr. Ross clarifies that floorboards must go perpendicular to the street, and are to be tongue and groove. Chairman Michelson prefers the floorboards be perpendicular to the street. Vice Chairman Quirk asks about which direction the joists run under the floorboards, but Mr. Tapia does not know offhand. Mr. Sebbag also agrees to stain the floorboards.

Chairman Michelson reiterates a preference for beadboard for the porch roof.

Chairman Michelson asks how many windows are in the rear of the house. Mr. Sebbag notes there are somewhere between 10 and 12 windows in the rear.

8:35PM

Rich Sudol, 313 Franklin Place, details some history of the home and its lack of maintenance. He expresses that the floorboards should be perpendicular to the street for water runoff purposes. He also notes the lattice was originally square, not diamond, and he would prefer to see it as squares.

Vice Chairman Quirk expresses that if the latticework needs to be redone anyway, that the lattice should be square.

Brian Munroe, 313 Franklin Place, notes that the roof needs to be replaced as well.

Mr. Munroe notes that the applicant should have known this property is in a historic district due to the various signs around the district.

Mr. Ross notes that GAF makes a type of shingle called “slateline” that resembles slate, and that that should be the shingle style used for the porch roof.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Quirk for HPC 2022-05 to grant a CA for the following:

Replace the front porch lattice work with wood lattice in square pattern between the porch piers.

Replace 6 floor joists.

Replace the entire front porch floor with tongue and groove wood, perpendicular to the street.

The porch floor, ceiling, and steps shall be stained in identical color.

The front steps shall be bullnosed.

The existing columns shall be repaired and reinstalled.

The porch railing on the right side of the house, as seen from the street, shall be identical to the left side railings.

The applicant may install new asphalt shingles using GAF Slateline, in a color that must be approved by Barton Ross.

The porch ceiling will have beadboard.

The portion of the application for the request to install vinyl windows is denied.

Chairman Michelson amends the motion to include latticework under the stair risers.

Roll Call Vote:

Lawrence Quirk – Yes

Gary Schneider – Yes

Gail Alexander – Yes

Kirk Hemphill – Yes

William Garrett - Yes

William Michelson – Yes

Motion is carried.

- 3. Hearing #2: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-11. Applicant - Owner Anastasia Quinones, 1314 Watchung Avenue; Block 814 Lot 3. Broadway Historic District. Vendor All Season Solar, LLC.** Applicant seeks to install solar panels on the rear of their roof.

8:55pm

Anastasia Quinones at 1314 Watchung Avenue.

Ms. Quinones summarizes the application, looking to approve the installation of solar panels. She would like solar panels to reduce the costs of her monthly energy bill. She notes her neighbors also have solar panels, and has exhausted other sustainability related options.

Commissioner Alexander asks if the panels will be visible from the street. Ms. Quinones notes the panels will be placed in the rear of the house and on the inside roof of the garage, not visible from the road.

Chairman Michelson notes that he was able to see the back roof and the garage roof from both Lake Street and Hillside Avenue. He expresses concerns about allowing piecemeal solar panels, from an administrative perspective.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the positioning of the solar panels on the garage doors. Ms. Quinones asks for her solar reps to answer this.

Jay Davis at 5668 Birch Street Mays Landing NJ 08330, with All Season Solar.

Mr. Davis notes the garage roof is pitched east to west and the panels would be on the west side. There are 12 panels to the one block. He clarifies that the panel will be on the right side of the roof, roughly 3.5 feet by 5 feet per panel, 4 inches above the roof. They would be black cells, black brackets, and black backsheets.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the coverage of the rear roof. Mr. Davis notes that because of the dormers and chimney, that there would be a break in panels on either side of the dormers. The total dimensions on the rear roof of the main house would be 10 feet by 15 feet, and 9 feet by 11 feet in triple black, 4 inches above the roof. There would also be some electrical equipment on the side of the house by the electrical meter. There are 3 grey squares that are breakers along the way by the meter.

Chairman Michelson asks if the meter is visible from the street.

9:10pm

Brian Munroe, 313 Franklin Place, asks about the life expectancy of the solar panels, and if they are recyclable. Mr. Davis notes that all panels he has removed needed to be recycled, and points out that the guarantee is for 25 years.

Mr. Munroe asks if this company provides solar shingles. Mr. Davis notes that in this instance, the panels are not shingles.

Ms. Quinones wants the roof work to be done in tandem with the solar panels. Chairman Michelson notes that the roof also needs to be approved. Ms. Quinones notes the roof was severely damaged after Hurricane Ida.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks Mr. Davis if his company offers roof shingle solar panels, to which he notes that All Season currently does not provide, and they are fairly cost prohibitive.

Chairman Michelson asks if putting panels on one side of the roof is viable. Mr. Davis notes that they are only possibly viable on the south side of the roof.

Chairman Michelson feels that there does not seem to be any viable roof space for the panels to be installed upon, and that it seems impossible to install them without being visible from the street.

Commissioner Schneider remarks that neighbors would also have to look at the panels on the roof, and is hesitant to set this precedent for solar panels. He also does not believe historic districts are ready for these kinds of solar panels.

Motion to deny the application made by Vice Chairman Quirk and seconded by Commissioner Schneider.

Roll call vote is held:

Roll Call Vote:

Lawrence Quirk – Yes (to deny)

Gary Schneider – Yes

Gail Alexander – Yes

Kirk Hemphill – Yes

Bill Garrett - Yes

William Michelson -- Yes

Motion is carried, application is denied.

- 4. Hearing #3: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-12. Applicant and Owner - Gowtham Reddy, 980 Hillside Avenue; Architect - Anastasia Harrison. Block 821 Lot 8. Hillside Avenue Historic District. Applicant seeks to rehabilitate home.**

9:25PM

Gowtham Reddy, currently resides at 404 Saratoga Road, Branchburg NJ, appeared.

Anastasia Harrison, architect, 26 North Avenue, Garwood NJ, appeared.

Chairman Michelson asks who owns the property and who will be living there. Mr. Reddy notes that an LLC was simply used in order to get a construction loan, and that he intends to move in with his wife, as he now owns the property.

Ms. Harrison makes comments about the property and the changes that are looking to be made. It is noted that goal is to restore the original home.

Chairman Michelson asks about having a garage under a dwelling unit, in the carriage house, and about ensuring the proposal is up to code.

Chairman Michelson asks where there would be access to the backyard, in reference to HPC exhibit 7. Ms. Harrison notes the driveway is one way, but there are also steps towards the rear of the property that allow for access to the rear yard.

Chairman Michelson asks about the basement door, which has a nine-pane window. Ms. Harrison expressed interest in adding a bit of a modern touch to some of the elements that are in-kind with the existing character.

Chairman Michelson asks about the red clay tiles on the front porch and if there is the intent to change to bluestone. Ms. Harrison notes that, because of the damage to the existing tile, the inflection is to eliminate the red color and use bluestone where it is damaged.

Vice Chairman Quirk about the wall in the front of the property, and its length, to which Ms. Harrison notes it would go from corner to corner on the front of the property. The wall would match the red brick of the house as much as possible. Caps are to be placed on the four piers of the fence.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the patio glass doors that would be used to replace certain windows, and their pattern. Ms. Harrison notes that the pattern would be consistent with the other doors, and would be Marvin ultimate wood in model.

Vice Chairman Quirk asks about the changes to the balustrades on the porches. Ms. Harrison explains the balustrades are going to remain but be raised on cast stone.

Commissioner Alexander asks about the window on the right side that is to be bricked up, and whether that can be salvaged. Ms. Harrison notes that bricking the window was the most appropriate way to address the issue of not fitting a modern kitchen as opposed to removing the window altogether.

Commissioner Hemphill asks if bluestone would be used for the sidewalk leading to the front of the house, which is confirmed by Ms. Harrison.

10:03PM

Brian Munroe at 313 Franklin Place, notes that the bricking of the window would historically be done with closed shutters, so as not to look bricked in.

Rich Sudol at 313 Franklin Place, echoes Mr. Munroe's comment on the bricked window shutters. He also notes that brick columns on the corners on the front wall would be good to have.

Jodi Perullo, 996 Hillside Av., notes that the taxes on this house are in arrears, and asks about the HPC's powers to issue a CA with that status, but Chairman Michelson says the HPC has no purview over that.

Ms. Perullo expresses concerns over the ownership of the house and carriage home. Mr. Reddy notes that no tenants are being sought for the carriage house, and that the intended use is for single family residential.

Mack Rice at 970 Hillside Avenue. expresses concern over living near a construction site, and is concerned for proper handling of debris during the construction process.

Vice Chairman Quirk expresses two issues. First, he would like to know if the windows will match the French doors on the sunporch. Applicant agrees to add the mullion in the middle. Second, the corner columns may need a variance, and posits the potential for the HPC to issue a recommendation to the Zoning Board.

Motion to grant HPC 2022-12 a certificate of appropriateness made by Vice Chairman Quirk as follows:
Replace the existing terracotta tiles on the front porch as seen on Exhibit A
Replace the existing light on the front door balcony as shown in Exhibit A
Replace the front door hardware as seen in Exhibit A
Construct a perimeter wall no higher than 4 feet with a gate at the front walkway and driveway and two piers flanking each one.
The brick used in the perimeter wall will match the brick of the house.

The location of the 194 foot perimeter wall shall be as shown on Exhibit A.
The windows on the North and South sides that are proposed to be replaced shall be composed to match the existing French doors.
The doors and windows in the basement windows may be reduced in size.
The balustrades on the second floor may be modified to 3 feet in height and are to be reused.
The middle window on the top floor of the garage may be changed to a door as shown in Exhibit A.
With the exception of the changes noted above, the windows shall be configured to match the existing windows with Marvin ultimate wood windows.
Existing slate roof on the house and garage shall remain and any repairs shall match the existing slate roof.

Seconded by Commissioner Schneider.

Chairman Michelson asks for a revised set of drawings to reflect the changes discussed.
Chairman Michelson adds to the motion:
Should the front post need a variance, the HPC has no objection.

Roll call vote held:

Roll Call Vote:
Lawrence Quirk – Yes
Gary Schneider – Yes
Gail Alexander – Yes
Kirk Hemphill – Yes
William Garrett - Yes
William Michelson -- Yes

- 5. Hearing #4: Certificate of Appropriateness HPC 2022-17 Applicant and Owner Jenee Anderson, 732 Belvidere Avenue; Block 903 Lot 5. Netherwood Heights Historic District.**
Applicant seeks to install iron fences on this property.

10:28PM

Jenee Anderson at 41 Sheffield Street, Jersey City, would like to extend and repair a two-car garage on the property, and install privacy fences. She claims there have been several instances of trespassing that warrants her request for a fence.

Chairman Michelson notes there are no drawings for the garage. Apparently some of what the applicant intended to provide were accidentally omitted.

Chairman Michelson notes there was a wood staircase at the south rear corner of the house that was installed without approval, that needs addressing. There is also a shed, on the south side of the house, that is visible from the street, that is also not approved.

Ms. Anderson notes the stairs were installed prior to the purchase of the house, for safety purposes, and that the shed in question is not a shed or extension, but rather a pre-existing sunroom.

Ms. Anderson notes the shed would be stucco like the rest of the house is.

Chairman Michelson notes that the steps and railings are wood, but questions what is underneath. Ms. Anderson comments that she believes there is concrete under the steps.

Chairman Michelson asks about the downspouts previously granted approval, and why they haven't been put in. Ms. Anderson notes that she is waiting to install the windows first, before installing the gutters and downspouts.

Commissioner Alexander asks which style of gate and fencing Ms. Anderson will use. Ms. Anderson will use an iron-clad fence, on the left and right sides, for privacy. No manufacturer information is readily available. The columns where the fence would be attached would be made of stucco.

Commissioner Alexander confirms that the fence won't go across the whole property, to which Ms. Anderson reiterates that it is only for privacy in the rear.

Motion to carry HPC 2022-17 to the May 24th meeting made by Commissioner Alexander and seconded by Commissioner Hemphill. Voice vote held with all in favor.

Public Comment

Discussions

833 Richmond St. Solar Panels

Ash Ahmed with VisionSolar

Mr. Ahmed seeks clarity that in historic districts there is no interest in roof mounted panels. Because there is no interest from the HPC, VisionSolar will convey to the applicant that they will not be able to install the panels at this time.

Barton Ross – HPC Training

- Chairman Michelson asked for Barton Ross to select 3 dates and times for 1-hour HPC trainings.

Jewett property at 927 Central Av - Chairman, Michelson explains the history of this property and the outstanding violation. He says there is currently a Municipal Court trial date of May 26th, but staff seems unable to go forward with it.

HPC Awards

- Vice Chairman Quirk explains the history of HPC awards for homeowners and stewards
- Vice Chairman Quirk asks if the HPC should nominate and decide who gets them, or if this should go out to the public.
 - o Commissioner Alexander favors a public opinion with a hard deadline

Abandoned and Non-Conforming Properties and Redevelopment Plans

- Chairman Michelson explains the interplay of zoning and redevelopment plans, which can be used to circumvent existing zoning regulations. He is concerned about the legality and desirability of displacing zoning, and that the HPC needs to be advised of such potential projects.

11:15PM

Chairman Michelson asks for an additional 15 minutes for public comment.

Ray Costello, 215 E 9th Street lives across from the vacant lot at 228-236 East 9th Street, and would prefer a vacant lot over the proposed apartment building.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Hemphill and seconded by Vice Chairman Quirk.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30PM.