PLANNING BOARD OF PRINCETON

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 6, 2022
Virtual Zoom Meeting - #84527105008
Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: Louise Wilson, David Cohen, Mia Sacks, Julie Capozzoli, Philip Chao, Alvin McGowen, Owen O’Donnell, Tim Quinn, Zenon Tech-Czarny

ALTERNATES: Nat Bottigheimer

ABSENT: Louise Wilson, Jack Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Gerald Muller, Esq., Board Attorney; Michael La Place, Planning Director; James Purcell, Assistant Municipal Engineer; Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer; Elizabeth Kim, Historic Preservation Officer; Justin Lesko, Acting Board Secretary

Gerald Muller, Esq. called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., acknowledging the opening statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, stating that notice of this meeting was filed on the 22nd day of January 2021.

OATH OF OFFICE – SWEARING IN

Mr. Muller provided the oath of office to Ms. Capozzoli, Mr. Chao and Mr. Bottigheimer to affirm their new terms. He advised that Mr. Taylor will need to be sworn in at the next meeting.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

[1] Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Mr. McGowen, speaking for the Nominating Committee, moved to nominate Mrs. Wilson as Chair for 2022.

Hearing no further nominations, a motion was made by Mr. McGowen, seconded by Mr. Chao and carried with the following roll call vote:
FOR: Capozzoli, Chao, Cohen, McGowen, O’Donnell, Quinn, Sacks, Tech-Czarny, Bottigheimer
AGAINST: None
ABSTAIN: Wilson

Mr. McGowen, speaking for the Nominating Committee, moved to nominate Mr. Quinn as Vice Chair for 2022.

Hearing no further nominations, a motion was made by Mr. McGowen, seconded by Mr. Chao and carried with the following roll call vote:
FOR: Capozzoli, Chao, Cohen, McGowen, O’Donnell, Sacks, Tech-Czarny, Bottigheimer
AGAINST: None
ABSTAIN: Quinn
[2] Appointment of Planning Board Attorney: Mr. Cohen moved to appoint the law offices of Gerald Muller, Esq. as Planning Board Attorney, seconded by Ms. Capozzoli and carried by a voice vote of nine ayes. No one opposed. No one abstained.

[3] Appointment of Planning Board Secretary: Ms. Capozzoli moved to appoint Kerry Philip as Planning Board Secretary, seconded by Mr. McGowen and carried by a voice vote of nine ayes. No one opposed. No one abstained.

[4] Resolutions
   [a] Meeting Calendar – February 2022 through January 2023: Vice Chair Quinn noted that the Board met 33 times in 2022. Mr. O’Donnell moved to approve the meeting calendar as amended, motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and carried by a voice vote of nine ayes. No one opposed. No one abstained.

   [b] Resolution for Special Meetings: Ms. Capozzoli moved to approve the resolution for special meetings, motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and carried by a voice vote of nine ayes. No one opposed. No one abstained.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Muller stated the West Windsor Real Estate application will not be heard tonight as the applicant’s noticing was done incorrectly and the Board could not assume jurisdiction.

MINUTES

a) February 6, 2020 – Regular Meeting: Carried
b) March 5, 2020 – Regular Meeting: Motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 5, 2020 as amended was made by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. McGowen and carried by voice vote of 5-0 amongst those eligible to vote

RESOLUTION

a) Tenacre Foundation – 9/9/21 (carried from 12/9/21)
   Prelim/Final Major Site Plan with variances
   884 Great Road
   File #P2121-043P

   Motion was made by Mrs. Capozzoli to approve the findings of fact, seconded by Mr. Cohen. The vote was 7-0 in favor. Motion carried with the following roll call vote:
   FOR: Capozzoli, Cohen, McGowen, O’Donnell, Quinn, Tech-Czarny, Chao
   AGAINST: No one
   ABSTAIN: No one

HEARINGS

a) West Windsor Real Estate
   Prelim/Final Major Site Plan and Subdivision
   174, 182 and 188 Bayard Lane
Block 6802, Lots 44, 45 and 46
File #P2121-027P/SPF
MLUL deadline for action: 1/16/22

Mr. Quinn noted, as previously stated, this hearing has been removed from this meeting’s agenda.

Mr. Muller stated that the notice that was published in the newspapers and sent to everyone on the service list is not adequate, and the Board therefore would not have jurisdiction tonight. The reason for that is that only a part of the instructions, that pertaining to the webinar ID number, was put in the notice without the link information.

DISCUSSION

a) Historic Preservation Commission – Nomination for Designation
Prospect Avenue Historic District

Michael La Place, Planning Director, introduced the discussion and stated the nomination is an opportunity to formalize a recommended historic district included in the Municipal Master Plan, as well as an outcome of the extensive hearings on Princeton University’s Environmental Studies and Engineering and Applied Science (ES & SEAS) and 91 Prospect Avenue applications. He stated the University supports the designation on Prospect Avenue.

Mr. Muller stated one of the conditions of the recent 91 Prospect Avenue application was the University’s support of a local historic district designation on Prospect Avenue.

Elizabeth Kim, Historic Preservation Officer, said the Board is very familiar with the recent projects along Prospect Avenue, including the proposed disruptions to 91 Prospect Avenue and three Queen Anne Victorian houses on the north side of Prospect Avenue. She stated that Sandy Harrison, Chair of Princeton Prospect Foundation Board, and Clifford Zink, Historic Preservation consultant for the Princeton Prospect Foundation, presented a concept review for the Prospect Avenue Historic District before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at their July meeting for future protection. She advised that the Municipal Master Plan recommended this district as the “Club Row Historic District” with altered geographic limits that Mr. Zink will describe. She commended Mr. Zink, Mr. Harrison and the members of the public who spoke in favor of preserving the Prospect Avenue buildings at the Planning Board. She described the procedures under the historic preservation section of the municipal ordinance to designate a historic district. She stated the HPC strongly supported the nomination, after several proposals and revisions, in a resolution.

Ms. Capozzoli, Chair of the HPC, stated that the HPC’s subcommittee of Members Shirley Satterfield, Freda Howard and Tom Pyle strongly felt that the architectural merits of the proposed district as well as the contributions of African-American employees of the eating clubs and history of class, racial, gender and ethnic exclusion at the eating clubs merited preservation, noting that the negative history of the street should be told alongside the positive one, as stated in the HPC’s resolution.
Ms. Kim stated procedurally the HPC recommends a district nomination, as they have, to the Planning Board, which is tasked with providing a recommendation to the Council, who will then vote on approving the district.

Vice Chair Quinn asked what action the Board is being asked to take tonight. Mr. La Place advised the Board can provide a recommendation to the Council. Ms. Kim stated that the Council holds the final vote on approval of a historic district. Vice Chair Quinn stated that the Board will see the written ordinance for nomination of the district prior to the Council hearing and tonight’s task is for the Board to discuss the nomination.

Mr. Harrison noted that municipalities may be reluctant if property owners within a proposed historic district are not in favor of approval and stated that the University owns about half of the properties in the proposed district while the eating clubs own the other half. He presented a Memorandum of Agreement between the Princeton Prospect Foundation and Princeton University supporting the proposed district and a joint letter from the Princeton Prospect Foundation and Graduate Interclub Council to the Historic Preservation Commission supporting the proposed district.

Mr. Zink thanked Mr. La Place, Ms. Kim and HPC Chair Capozzoli for their leadership on historic preservation and this nominating process. He presented the original 1992 nominating documents and proposed boundary for the Prospect Avenue Historic District and the current proposed boundary with four fewer buildings due to demolition and one relocated away from the district. He stated 91 Prospect Avenue has been removed from the district as the former Court Club building on it will be relocated across the street with new construction on the lot as part of the ES & SEAS project.

Mr. Chao asked if the Olden House is slated for demolition as part of the ES & SEAS project. Mr. Zink stated that it is outside of the construction zone and will continue to be used for faculty housing, though it is currently vacant in anticipation of the adjacent construction.

Mr. La Place commended the University for being a partner in supporting this historic district and for amending their ES & SEAS applications, as well as for making a commitment to revitalize and enhance Prospect Avenue with large shade trees and enhanced lighting among other improvements extending past the eating clubs. He stated the historic district will strengthen those efforts.

Public comment was opened.

Eva Martin noted the anniversary of the January 6th insurrection attempt in Washington, D.C., and stated meetings like this one show that democracy is alive and working in Princeton. She read excerpts from her first letter to the editor in June regarding support for the proposed historic district.

John Heilner said he graduated from the University in 1962 and was an eating club member, so preservation of these buildings was personal for him. He thanked the University for their support of this nomination and noted that this is their first time expressing support for a local historic district. He said he had experience with two other local historic district
designations in Princeton and finds that this one meets the requirements for a designation. He
stated that he and his classmates hope to return to the campus and find it as they remembered it.

Ruth Sayer stated that she was involved with Mr. Heilner in an attempt to make the
western section of Princeton a designated local historic district. She said that designating the
district is very important for the reasons Mr. Heilner said.

James Bash commented in support of the proposed district and referenced an op-ed by
Alan Medvin in The Town Topics regarding Prospect Avenue. He described the architectural
significance of the eating club buildings and the three Queen Anne Victorian houses on the
avenue.

Kip Cherry stated that we are at a great milestone in town-gown relations and is proud of
the University and community participants. She noted Prospect Avenue is a transition area
between the University and community, physically and historically.

Karl Pettit stated that he arrived in Princeton in 1946, attended Princeton Country Day
School off of Broadmead Street, and remembers attending P-rades on Prospect Avenue. He said
Sandy Harrison, Clifford Zink and he worked with the University to save the Queen Anne
Victorian houses on Prospect Avenue and noted their history based on their significant
occupants. He said the University agreed to not use modern street lamps on the avenue, to not
use a gravel lawn in from of the future Theorist Pavillion and to incorporate a garden wall into the
Theorist Pavilion design.

Mr. Zink said the University deserves credit for coming around to preservation efforts on
Prospect Avenue and for agreeing to restore the McKim, Mead and White gate on Prospect
Avenue.

The public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

Mr. Bottigheimer stated that the Champs-Elysees has much greater pedestrian usage than
Prospect Avenue and has transformed throughout its history so it is not a precise comparison.

Mr. O’Donnell said preserving the history behind the buildings, both the good and the
bad, including racial and gender inequities and religious and ethnic exclusion, should be
recognized physically on the avenue.

Ms. Capozzoli stated Mr. Zink and Ms. Satterfield met several times to discuss the role of
the African American community in the eating clubs and Mr. Zink has further researched that
role. Mr. Zink said he met with Mrs. Satterfield and she provided phone numbers for community
members, whom he reached out to. He also referenced the oral history of the Witherspoon-
Jackson Community, I Hear My People Singing by Kathryn Watterson.

Mr. Cohen stated that Mr. O’Donnell’s concern was deliberately and carefully considered
in the HPC recommendation for the district and he would like to see it endorsed by the Board.
Ms. Sacks stated that the relationship between the Municipality and the University has not always resulted in a happy compromise and she is pleased to see this historic compromise made.

Ms. Sacks made a motion to endorse the HPC’s resolution, seconded by Mr. McGowen. The motion carried with the following roll call vote (9-0):

FOR: Capozzoli, Chao, Cohen, McGowen, O’Donnell, Quinn, Sacks, Tech-Czarny, Bottigheimer
AGAINST: No one
ABSTAIN: No one

Mr. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. McGowen. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Lesko, Senior Planner
PLANNING BOARD OF PRINCETON

Approved: 3/3/22

Louise Wilson, Chair
PLANNING BOARD OF PRINCETON