

**CITY OF NORWALK  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
JANUARY 22, 2020  
NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM  
CITY HALL PARK**

ATTENDANCE: Suzanne Betts, Chair; Holly Cuzzone; Dana Laird;  
Tom Livingston; Lisa Wilson Grant; Judith Bacal; Liz Golden

OTHERS: Diane Jellerette, Norwalk Historical Society; Susan Gilgore, Lockwood  
Mathews Mansion Museum; Tod Bryant, Norwalk Preservation Trust;

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Betts called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

The November meeting minutes were not available, acceptance postponed until Feb.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present this evening.

**REPORTS – BOARDS**

A. Norwalk Historical Society

Ms. Jellerette presented her report as follows:

- Norwalk Historical Society planning a Timeline exhibit for Mill Hill, and currently working on several grant opportunities to help with funding.
- Holiday open house showcased new collection items on display in the conference room at the Museum.
- Over 50 attendees at the Martin Luther King Day family-oriented event to make paper flowers
- Upcoming events include a one-woman show depicting key historical women on Feb 29 and working on additional events for Women’s History Month in March.

B. Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

Ms. Gilgore reported the following:

- Repairs to the mansion veranda is set to begin this week with repairs expected to be complete in 1-3 months depending on weather and any additional issues found once work begins.
- Phase IV contracts with the State and David Scott Parker Architects for the electrical and heating infrastructure work have been signed
- Wooden guardrails have been installed to prevent event parking on the lawn
- DOT fence project expected to start in April
- Launching a new 2020 Young Writers Competition
- Finalizing details for a concert event at the end of March

## REPORTS

### A. BUILDINGS

No updates other than those mentioned above under Board Reports.

### B. CEMETERIES

No updates to report.

## OLD BUSINESS

Ms Grant asked about the demolition of 15 Ensign Road. Mr. Bryant stated that the Norwalk Preservation Trust had filed a demo delay and was informed that the permit application had been withdrawn, although the sign remained on the property. A second delay was filed, but he was then informed it was too late. The Commission did not receive an updated notice of a demo application. Several commissioners raised concerns that the required notification process was flawed and further investigation was required to ensure that sufficient notice was provided in the future.

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. Proposed additions to the City's Historic Resource Inventory

Two properties were presented to the Commission by Tod Bryant of the Norwalk Preservation Trust and Kevney Moses, representing the firm owning the properties. Both multi-family structures are among the few surviving examples of the late nineteenth century neighborhood of grand Queen Anne residences in this area. The owner plans to maintain and restore internal features including moldings, staircase cases, woodwork, etc, as well as some restoration of the exterior in keeping with the historic character of these properties:

**138 Flax Hill Road** - This was built for George A. Jennings, who was the Vice President of Banks Law Publishing Company in New York City. It was the most prestigious and oldest law

publishing company in the United States. The company traced its beginnings to a bookstore founded in Albany, New York in 1790.

**35 Clay Street** - This house is one of a The house was owned by Herbert A. Mathewson, who was a partner, along with former Connecticut Governor George Lounsbury, in the ladies' fine shoe manufacturing firm of Lounsbury, Mathewson & Co. at 5 Haviland Street. The company employed three hundred workers in 1901.

- \*\* **MS. LAIRD MOVED TO ADD 138 FLAX HILL ROAD AND 35 CLAY STREET TO THE CITY'S HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY**
- \*\* **MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**
- \*\* **MR. LIVINGSTON ABSTAINED**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED**

B. Proposed renovations to 455 West Avenue

Presentation was made by Rick Constanti of Halloran & Sage and the architect regarding proposed plans to renovate the building at 455 West Avenue into an art gallery, studio space and café. Changes include replacing aluminum doors with wood; enlarging several windows in keeping with the style of the building and other windows; and restoring the cupula.

The Commission agreed that an art space would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood. It was recommended that the owner contact the church in New Canaan and the Norwalk History Room for any old photos that may aid with the cupola restoration and repairs.

- \*\* **MS. CUZZONE MOVED TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED RENOVATIONS TO THE BUILDING AT 455 WEST AVENUE.**
- \*\* **MS. LAIRD SECONDED**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED**

C. Election of officers

Ms. Betts announced that she would be stepping down from the Commission effective at the end of February and that the Mayor had been informed. New officers needed to be elected.

- \*\* **MS. CUZZONE NOMINATED MS. LAIRD FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIR.**
- \*\* **MR. LIVINGSTON SECONDED**
- \*\* **MS. LAIRD WAS ELECTED AS CHAIR**
  
- \*\* **MS. BETTS NOMINATED MS. CUZZONE FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR.**
- \*\* **MS. GRANT SECONDED**

**\*\* MS. CUZZONE WAS ELECTED AS VICE CHAIR**

Ms. Betts explained that Committee roles for Finance and Cemeteries were also needed and should be selected at the next meeting

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. LAIRD MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**\*\* MR. LIVINGSTON SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Betts  
Historical Commission