

Public Hearing Minutes

Augusta Historic Preservation Commission

January 6, 2016

6:00 pm at City Center, Lecture Hall

Members Present: Lorie Mastemaker, Dan Stevens, Dale McCormick, Jerry Bumford, Phyllis von Herrlich

Members Absent: Andy Loman

Others Present: Betsy Poulin-City Staff, Richard Bridges, Erik Fitzsimmons, William Brown, Carol Brown, Jeremy Whatley

Subject: Wrecking and Demolition Permit Application for 9 Patterson Street, residential three unit apartment building, owned by Erik Fitzsimmons, Map 38, Lot 29, approximately 165 years old.

Introductions: Betsy Poulin-City Staff, Erik Fitzsimmons-Owner and resident of 11 Patterson Street, William & Carol Brown-7 Patterson Street, Jeremy Whatley-6 School Street Place.

Lorie Mastemaker, Chair, gave a description of the purpose of the meeting, ground rules, and the format.

Betsy Poulin, City Staff, gave a description of the application and the December 9th Augusta Historic Preservation Commission meeting finding of the building's potential significance.

Mr. Erik Fitzsimmons, gave an overview of the building and future property plans.

- Building has been vacant of 8 years.
- Wants to tear it down and divide amongst his neighbors. He wants space for his children to play, this is a factor for him to stay in Augusta.
- The Browns, at 7 Patterson Street, want a garden.
- Mr. Whatley, at 6 School Street Place would like room for a garage.
- Mr. Fitzsimmons wanted to purchase the property years ago but the open market price was too high when he only wanted the land and would need to demolish the building.
- There was discussion with Dan Nichols, City Staff, about adding some shrubs to prevent cut through from School Street Place, but these are probably not needed if a fence will be added in the future.
- The neighbors want this building to come down, it is a health hazard and would improve property values.

William and Carol Brown - 7 Patterson Street

- Have lived in their house for 26 years and have seen some disgusting things from 9 and 5 Patterson Street. Removing the building will improve the neighborhood.
- When the basement at 9 Patterson Street was pumped, the sewage went onto their property.

Jeremy Whatley – 6 School Street Place

- When 9 Patterson Street went into foreclosure, the bulkhead was left open. Sewer backed up in to the basement. It was pumped out. A woman bought the building online and discovered that the plumbing didn't work and there were bedbugs. She abandoned the property. There is no value in keeping the building. It would be an improvement to the neighborhood to have it removed.

Commission Questions:

- No additional questions.

Public Comments:

- No additional public comments.

Public Hearing Closed.

AHPC Discussion:

- Phyllis: Can anything be done to keep these buildings from falling into disrepair?
 - Dale: Property maintenance ordinance will be discussed at upcoming City Council meetings.
- Lorie: Milton Newell built the building, and had a patent for a carriage spring.
- Phyllis: The demolition delay will only delay. Some original elements are still in the house, the engineering review was done for the property noting work needed on the foundation. Maybe some elements of the building can be saved.
- Jerry: The inventor wasn't in Maine when he filed his patent, therefore Criteria 4 which was used for potential significance really isn't valid.

Motion made by Jerry to find the Building to NOT be significant based upon all 5 criteria.

Second: None

Motion by Dale that the house is significant due to Criteria #4: Does meet criteria due to Milton Newell, inventor and Criteria #5: Does meet criteria due to neighborhood context.

Second: Phyllis

Vote: 2:3 Motion failed.

Dan: The AHPC should encourage the City Council to bring city owned buildings over 50 years old to the AHPC for review prior to the decision to demolish.

Motion made by Jerry to find the Building to NOT be significant based upon the 5 criteria.

Second: Dan

Vote: 3:2 Motion passes.

Building is NOT significant. Wrecking and Demolition Permit may be granted.

Public Hearing Adjourned to hold Regular Meeting.

Minutes by Betsy Poulin, City Staff.