



**BOROUGH OF NEW PROVIDENCE
AGENDA**
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, January 8, 2025 – 7:30 P.M.
Lincoln Room - Municipal Center
360 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, New Jersey

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:35pm. The Public Meeting Notice was read.

2. Roll Call:

Member	Class	Type	Present	Absent
▪ Malathi Ananthakrishnan	A			X
▪ Dan Badgley	B		X	
▪ Molly Springer	C		X	
▪ John Sponauer	C		X	
▪ Jeff Grob	C		X	
▪ Richard Angel	C – Alternate #1			X

Also in attendance: Councilmen Matt Cumiskey & Alex Kogen

3. Organization of Commission

A. Nominations for Chairperson

Jeff Grob was nominated for and elected Chairperson.

B. Nominations for Vice Chairperson

John Sponauer was nominated for and elected Vice Chairperson.

C. Nominations for Recording Secretary

Molly Springer was nominated for and elected Recording Secretary.

4. New Business

A. Welcoming new member Richard Angel

Mr. Angel was not in attendance at the meeting so he will be welcomed at a future meeting.

B. Topics for the 2024 End-of-Year Report to Council Due end of January.

1) Updating the database of historical properties was finished. Part One entailed verifying that the current listings of historical buildings/properties in New Providence are still extant. Part Two, currently underway, will involve completing the list of buildings/properties that should be added to the list. Molly Springer asked about the purpose of the database for those new to the commission. Jeff Grob explained that the database goes to the Building Department so that they are able to check it when people request permits and then consult the Historical Preservation Commission as needed.

Jeff Grob mentioned that the commission was also considering establishing historic districts/areas/neighborhoods to the database along with individual properties.

Possible inclusions are: Upper Livingston between Marion Avenue and the railroad tracks (Sears Roebuck homes); Martin's Lane; Madison Avenue; Clinton Avenue; the post-war apartment complexes on Gales Drive and the Murray Hill Apartments on Southgate Road. Matt Cumiskey asked what criteria were used for the current list of historic properties. The specifics are unknown at this time as the list used last year dates from 2004 and was begun as early as 1976. Some of the descriptions came from a survey the NJDEP/SHPO had done at some point of historic structures in the Borough. It is widely agreed among committee members that the purpose of the commission is to educate the community about the historic nature of their home and how it is important to the fabric of the town's history, not to dictate or control homeowners' decisions of what they can or can't do with their property.

- 2) Jeff will detail his trip to Westfield to attend a NJ Preservation Conference entitled: *“Legal Resources for Historic Preservation Commissions: The Constitutions, National Historic Preservation Act, NEPA, N.J. Municipal Land Use Law, N.J. DCA Regulation, Local Ordinances, and Recent issues and Trends”*.
- 3) The presentation updating the Mayor and Council of the Commission's progress to date of the historic property data base along with the issue of including an historic preservation element back into the Borough Master Plan.

C. Strategies discussing the economic benefits of historic preservation and making historic preservation an element of the borough's Master Plan continued. Councilman Cumiskey suggested organizing an info session at Borough Hall for people to "come find out" if their homes are on the list of historic buildings/properties. Alex Kogen asked whether we should consider putting the list of buildings/properties on the borough website and the consensus was that a selection may be the way to go, with homeowners' agreement necessary as well. It was suggested that we also talk to town realtors about providing historic building info in an informative manner to their clients looking for homes in New Providence. Area Realtors may also be a source for recommending properties to add to the historic properties list. The Historic Preservation Element was removed from the Master Plan only with the last revision; it had been included in the previous four iterations. It is important to get to the bottom of why it was removed/ what research was done.

Councilman Cumiskey recommended that the presentation should be done for the Planning Board before it is given to the Mayor and Town Council. Jeff Grob would like to talk to McKinley for recommendations as soon as possible. Jeff Grob asked Councilman Cumiskey how to get on the schedule for an upcoming planning board meeting. He responded that Margaret should be contacted. Cumiskey noted that the Master Plan will not be looked at this year, or at least not until mid or late year because the Board is focused on the Affordable Housing issue. He recommended approaching this with a long view because McKinley and the Town Council are primarily focused on affordable housing units for the time being and foreseeable future.

D. Discussion of Presentation to Mayor and Council

It was previously discussed that Mayor Morgan and/or the Historic Preservation Commission may want to send an informative "Say, did-you-know.....?" letter to

historic property homeowners, to let them know that their property has an historic aspect in the Borough's development. It must be done in a clearly non-threatening way so that people don't immediately think that their homes may be restricted in some fashion or impacted financially and worry needlessly.

E. Council Liaison Comments

Councilman Cumiskey said that he would like to talk to McKinley first, before Jeff Grob approaches her. She is expensive and he and Alex Kogen mentioned that we should not spend city monies on this unnecessarily. Jeff Grob commented that he was very much aware of that expense and of the same mentality.

F. Miscellaneous Business

None

G. Topics for February Meeting

5. Old Business

- A. Status of Properties Currently Listed On Historic Properties List
- B. Continued Discussion Of Other Properties With Potential Listing
- C. Continued Discussion of Letter to Property Owners

6. Communication Items – None

7. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.