

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**March 8, 2017 Meeting**  
**Town Council Chambers – 6:00 PM HDC meeting**

Present: Kim Balkcom, Chair, Erinn Calise, Kristen Carron, Lauren Drury and Gregory Maxwell.

Absent: Matthew McGeorge, Vice-Chair.

Staff: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner.

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Ms. Balkcom, Chair of the Commission, started the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Balkcom read the procedures into the record as follows: Each person addressing the Commission will state his/her name for the record. Although the Commission does not generally swear in applicants or their representatives, all witnesses are responsible for providing the HDC with true, accurate, and complete information. The applicant or the applicant's representative shall present the request before the Commission along with arguments and material in support of the application. HDC members will then have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions which are pertinent to the application. All other persons wishing to speak in favor of or against the application will then be asked to do so. All speakers are asked to avoid repetitive comments and confine their comments to those which are relevant to the application at hand. Cross examination by the general public may be allowed only if the Commission feels it would be appropriate and useful. All questions from the floor will be directed through the Chair only. After all of the relevant facts have been heard, the Chair will call for a motion. Once the motion has been made and seconded, the HDC only will discuss the motion followed by the Chair's call for a vote. Only active members of the Commission shall vote. The alternate will sit as an active member with full voting rights only when a regular member is unable to serve at any meeting. During the discussion among voting members, no further testimony from the floor will be accepted unless specifically requested by a Board member. Every effort will be made to render a decision this evening. The minutes of this meeting will be on file in the Planning Department within 14 days. Certificates of Appropriateness granted this evening will be available in the Planning Department within two (2) days of this hearing. The hearing of any

HDC application which has not yet started before 10:30 p.m. will not be heard this evening and a special hearing date will be scheduled. This rule, however, may be waived by a majority vote of the Commission. All decisions of the HDC are final and legally binding under the authority of Article XI of the East Greenwich Zoning Ordinance and Article 45, Section 24.1 of the RIGL. All decisions of this Commission may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Review.

Ms. Balkcom added the HDC considers local standards as well as Federal guidelines when reviewing applications and noted this is a collaborative process between the Board and the applicant. Ms. Balkcom explained the sequence for review of applications and its helpfulness to understand how the process works before the Board hears the applications. She noted each application is reviewed in of itself; the Commissioners receive the applications prior to the actual meeting in order for each Board member to review the content. The Board members identify properties and character defining features and historical and architecturally significant to the district that are taken into consideration. When applicants come before the Board there is a discussion in order to better understand the project at hand and answer questions that arise. The Board determines the standards that apply; hearing applications in this type of forum allows the Board to discuss alternatives, offer suggestions and provide support for the applicant to hopefully have a successful outcome and possibly save money.

Ms. Balkcom introduced the Board members and Staff present and read the application items into the record.

#### Historic District Commission Hearings

- 1. Matthew St. Ours  
16 Castle Street; Map 85 AP 1 Lot 115  
Addition/New Construction, Minor Modification & Replace  
Window and Door - FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom read Standard Commission #4 into the record as it is applicable to this application. It states all proposals for additions and architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own.

Mr. Matthew St. Ours, owner of 16 Castle Street was on hand to represent the application.

Mr. Maxwell commented the application appears very straight forward and looks like a great design. He asked the Applicant if there were any footings or foundation from the previous deck. Mr. St. Ours said no but there is a lot of concrete from an existing walkway which has deteriorated and there are plans to cover it. He added the mahogany lattice at the bottom of the deck will cover the walkway once installed.

Ms. Balkcom confirmed the lattice will be mahogany and not vinyl. She also inquired about the proposed vinyl railings. Mr. St. Ours asserted he thought the vinyl railings would be better but he would be happy to install a wood pressure treated railing in lieu of a vinyl railing. He also confirmed the lattice is of a mahogany wood material.

Mr. St. Ours was excited about the addition of the two-story deck, noting the views gained are spectacular and the tenants will be able to see the Cove.

Ms. Balkcom's only other concern was the design specification for the use of a Craftsman steel style door for both the front replacement and new rear door; she did not think that style was appropriate for an American 4-square. Mr. St. Ours stated the existing front door is a 6-panel door with a glass pane; he can definitely try to recreate that but he wanted to have an updated door that provided additional insulation and be more efficient. Mr. St. Ours was happy to install a preferred HDC style door.

Mr. Maxwell commented that the HDC is very fond of the existing front door. He recommended if insulation and efficiency is the issue then to add a weather tight storm door.

Mr. St. Ours noted that as for the new door in the rear he can get the rear door built to match the front door. Mr. Maxwell thought that would be ideal.

Ms. Balkcom indicated the building is pretty simple and the Applicant has already great exterior improvements; it would only do the house justice to install a door that matches the appropriate style of the home.

The Commission recommended the rear new door be refereed. Mr. Maxwell advised he was less concerned about it being an exact match since it is a brand new door and opening; just in the same door family.

With no further questions, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Matthew St. Ours.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 16 Castle Street.  
The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c. 1900 early Twentieth century, non-descript, American 4-square.
- 3) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 4) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Carron to approve the application as submitted for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 16 Castle Street for an addition/new construction (rear double deck). This is consistent with Commission Standard #4. Conditioned upon the railings are to be wood not vinyl. Additionally the new rear door will be refereed by HDC members Mr. Maxwell and Ms. Balkcom.

Seconded by Ms. Calise.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

**2. Anne Donovan**  
**47 West Street; Map 84 AP 2 Lot 95**  
**Minor Modification, partial demolition – FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom stated Commission Standards #4 and 9 apply to the application. *Standard 4* states all proposals for architectural changes shall be appropriate to the original design of the building or to later changes which have historic significance of their own. *Standard 9* states demolition, either partial or total, shall only be acceptable provided it would significantly benefit the Town, would serve the greater interest of the community as a whole, and that there are no

alternatives to demolition available. Demolitions shall not result in a significant threat or loss of an historic and/or architectural resource to the Town, State or nation.

Mr. Patrick Donovan, owner of the property, represented the application. He explained the subject chimney was a smaller rear secondary chimney that was removed for a “like for like” kitchen renovation. He added the chimney was not original to the house but was added at a later date possibly around the early 1900s. Mr. Donovan asserted the chimney was not too visible only to the southern located homes or if one was approaching from the southwest. He verified in order to fit the new kitchen cabinets and configuration in the chimney had to be removed.

Mr. Donovan had a structural engineer, Mr. Bruce Davies, inspect the chimney prior to removal, in terms of its role in the house. Mr. Davies indicated there were no issues with it being removed so Mr. Donovan verified it was removed at that point.

Ms. Balkcom inquired if there were any fireplaces associated with the chimney. Mr. Donovan said no, it went directly into the basement most likely for coal loading.

Mr. Maxwell commented there is another great looking center brick chimney on the roof of the house that is character defining. Mr. Donovan confirmed that is the main original chimney; the one he removed was smaller.

Ms. Drury questioned how the decision was made to take the chimney down without coming before the HDC. Mr. Donovan said it was his mistake; he made the judgement because he knew the chimney in question was not original to the home and it was essentially invisible and it was not being replaced with anything. At this point he realized he should have come to the Commission first.

Ms. Balkcom sympathized that sometimes it is not obvious of what the HDC has purview over; still a chimney removal is considered an alteration to the exterior of the home. She noted had the Applicant come before the Commission prior to the removal the HDC may have suggested keeping the exterior piece.

Mr. Donovan admitted his original concept was to keep the chimney from the roof up with a support structure but three contractors told him to take the whole chimney out.

Mr. Maxwell opined the chimney could have been rebuilt with veneer brick to which no one could tell the difference. He advised at this point since it was a secondary chimney he was less inclined to hang on to one.

With no further questions, Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Ms. Calise made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Anne Donovan.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 47 West Street.  
The structure in question is a contributing building; it is representative of a c. 1890 late-Victorian hipped roof structure.
- 3) The building does contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 4) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Calise to approve the application as submitted for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 47 West Street for the removal of a secondary chimney. This is consistent with Commission Standard #4 & 9.

Seconded by Ms. Carron.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

**3. Phillip Ryan Homes, Ltd.  
62 South Pierce Road; Map 54 AP 11 Lot 66  
Demolition and New Construction – Conceptual**

Ms. Balkcom stated Commission Standards # 5 and 9 apply to this application. *Standard 5* states new construction includes substantial additions or modifications to the exterior of existing buildings. The design of new construction need not be an exact or modified copy of historic styles and could be totally different in

concept. However, all proposals for new construction shall be compatible with the surrounding buildings in size, scale, materials and siting, as well as with the general character of the historic district. *Standard 9* states demolition, either partial or total, shall only be acceptable provided it would significantly benefit the Town, would serve the greater interest of the community as a whole, and that there are no alternatives to demolition available. Demolitions shall not result in a significant threat or loss of an historic and/or architectural resource to the Town, State or nation.

For the record, Ms. Balkcom explained a few of the HDC members got a tour of the subject property back in October when there was another potential buyer. At that point a few of the Commissioners took a site visit of the home and parcel with Mr. Allen Gammons whose proposed plan, although not on paper, was much different than what is being proposed this evening.

Ms. Balkcom asked the Applicant if he is the owner of the property. Mr. Primeau said he has not yet closed and therefore does not own the property. He expects to close in one or two months. Mr. Primeau commented there are RIDEM violations on the property which would be incorporated by the civil engineer in restoring the property to alleviate the environmental issues.

Ms. Balkcom advised that typically with a demolition request the first part of the process is for the Commission to determine the architectural and historical significance of the structure and its contribution to the Town. She did not think there is any question whatsoever the subject property is historically significant as there is a wealth of information regarding the property. Ms. Balkcom went on to say it is then up to the Commission to determine whether to accept the application as being complete. With that being said typically what is involved would be for example, has the Applicant explored all alternatives to demolition. With Mr. Primeau not being the property owner at this point there are limitations to that which she understands; the next thing she would analyze is what is proposed to go on this site should the house be demolished. Ms. Balkcom indicated that what the Applicant has proposed is not something she can support or something she would agree would fit in with the neighborhood and adhere to the standards for which the HDC reviews applications. Ms. Balkcom opined the comments she made were her own and she cannot speak for the rest of the Commission.

Mr. Thomas Primeau, President of Phillip Ryan Homes, represented the application. He was present this evening to request an advisory opinion from the HDC to the Planning Board pursuant to the request to demolish the existing structure. This application is part of a request under a comprehensive permit - a fast track mechanism that vests the authority of all boards, commissions, councils and zoning boards into the hands of the Planning Board – that is why he explained, he was asking for an advisory opinion because he believed that is the weight this particular commission has when a comprehensive permit has been filed.

Ms. Hitchen asked if a comprehensive permit covers demolition as well. Mr. Primeau said for demolition as well. Ms. Hitchen inquired if that was how his attorney interprets the comprehensive permit language. Mr. Primeau stated yes, unfortunately his attorney could not be present tonight due to a last minute conflict.

Mr. Primeau summarized his development experience and residency – he has been a long standing resident of East Greenwich and has developed 8 or 9 communities in town. He was instrumental in restoring Shore Mill located on the waterfront; it was one of the first projects to come under the 1982 Historic Recovery Act for historic structures. He learned a lot about restoring historic properties and he was happy to restore the Shore Mills building which created 21 residences. Along with Shore Mills he has also moved a historic structure once located on King Street now located on Crop Street.

Mr. Primeau asserted in this particular case where the Economic Recovery Act tried to put front historic preservation over new construction this particular submission is asking for the reverse – to demolish a property subservient to new construction.

Ms. Balkcom asked him what he meant by “subservient.”

Mr. Primeau indicated that new construction is going to be the benefit and we have our reasons why we cannot rehabilitate or restore the subject dwelling or barn that is historic on the property. He admitted he was not a structural engineer, but he did have Craig Carrigan present this evening that has performed an analysis of the conditions of the home from a structural standpoint. Mr. Primeau felt as though he fulfilled a number of conditions for which were stated

earlier, being that this project is being filed as a comprehensive permit – 25 percent of the inventory has to be dedicated to affordable housing units which will be 5 or 6 units. Mr. Primeau educated the Commission that the Town is far delinquent in affordable housing so the project will be providing a housing benefit and benefit in terms of affordable housing to the community. It will also provide economic development, although Mr. Primeau admitted he has not prepared a fiscal impact study to date but one will be forthcoming.

Mr. Primeau opined that an advisory request is reasonable and should be granted by this Commission. With that being said he thought the real structural evidence will have to be answered by Mr. Carrigan.

In terms of the proposed development, Mr. Primeau explained he is seeking to build a form of row housing in an arts & crafts style to be sold a younger market. He commented that he is currently working on an active adult community also located in East Greenwich. He added that he is trying to create a rhythm going down the street and not brought in a communal driveway to revert to the back side of the property which would make it feel more of an apartment complex. He noted there is the utilization of frontage on the street so it maintains the same rhythm as the houses marching down the street with individual driveways off of both South Pierce and Cora Roads.

In terms of the existing historic structure, Mr. Primeau proposed to save the most preeminent historic element of the house which was the chimney by rebuild it along with some of the other materials in the house – beams that can be salvaged and maybe the red mantel and utilize those elements to develop a communal space for the new development in the back in order to retain some of the historical elements of the historic home.

Ms. Balkcom commented that Mr. Primeau keeps saying advisory; she asked if he was insinuating that the HDC does not have purview over this demolition application because of it being a comprehensive permit.

Mr. Primeau said yes, that is his opinion and the HDC plays an advisory role but the Planning Board can do with it as they may.

Ms. Balkcom interpreted his answer as meaning the HDC cannot approve or deny the application but the Planning Board would. Mr. Primeau offered his

opinion again, noting the HDC can provide opinions to the Planning Board but the Planning Board can do with that as they see fit because under state law all power is vested in the Planning Board.

Ms. Hitchen was curious to know why Mr. Primeau submitted an application to the HDC for demolition when he is considering the project to be a comprehensive permit. She queried as to why he did not file a demolition request as one of the numerous waivers required under the fast track comp permit process. She pointed out the handful of zoning waivers necessary on the site plan but no mention of a waiver for demolition.

Mr. Primeau explained the engineers are not perfect and it could have been an oversight. He added this stage is just a pre-application, not a master plan request. He reiterated the demolition might have been something that was overlooked but obviously it is his intent that if he is showing all of this – meaning buildings over existing buildings – we are obviously seeking to demolish the existing buildings.

Ms. Calise questioned the existing barn on the property and inquired if the Applicant is also seeking to demolish that structure as well. Mr. Primeau said yes as the roof has fallen in on that; there is a tarp on it now which is not helping water from pouring into the barn.

Ms. Drury inquired if there was any engineering study performed on the barn even though it has been said it is collapsing. Mr. Primeau said no because no one made a request that the barn is a historical element; it has only been noted the house is historic.

Ms. Balkcom asserted the whole property is protected by the historic outlying statute. She commented that she was confused as to why we were all here.

Ms. Hitchen explained Mr. Primeau came to the Planning Office yesterday indicating that he was going to request an advisory opinion from the HDC only after he submitted a regular application for demolition, this was due to him filing a comprehensive permit application with the Planning Board. She advised the Commission that she would like the Town Solicitor to weigh in on his interpretation on the Comprehensive Permit procedure that includes demolition requests.

Mr. Primeau attested that in any event the circumstance would be the same - the HDC is going to render an opinion.

Ms. Balkcom commented that demolition is a whole different process – she ran through the scenarios of what could happen this evening: HDC approve or deny the demolition or Applicant withdraws. Mr. Primeau commented that as long as he could proceed with the application he submitted to the Planning Department on February 16<sup>th</sup> (pre-application) as he was ready to move forward to the Planning Board. He added that he submitted the full application for the Planning Board but was told he could not move forward unless he went to the HDC first.

Ms. Hitchen advised that both she and Ms. Bourbonnais believe and would argue that Mr. Primeau has to come before the HDC first for demolition as demolition is not an activity covered by the Comprehensive Permit state statute or local affordable housing law. She added that it is also are understanding that the HDC has not just an advisory role in demolition review but actual purview and authority separate and apart from the Planning Board's role as the local review board for building new housing units as part of a Comprehensive Permit. Ms. Hitchen reiterated that she would like the Town Solicitor to weigh in on the issue.

Mr. Primeau felt as though all power is vested with the Planning Board, but that is not to say the HDC or anyone else can make some kind of recommendation either in favor or against or somewhere in between to the Planning Board.

Ms. Balkcom commented that Mr. Primeau has consulted with his attorney now the Town has to consult with our attorney.

Mr. Primeau harangued that when a submission is made for a Comprehensive Permit it is supposed to be heard within 45 days. Ms. Hitchen asserted the Pre-application comprehensive permit is being reviewed at the next TRC meeting, scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> therefore feels the Town is moving forward with the application.

Ms. Hitchen commented thus far only Ms. Balkcom has been the only Commissioner to put forth her opinion of the project.

Ms. Calise noted that she would like a site visit of the property since she did not have the opportunity to walk through the property last October.

Ms. Drury stated that what has been submitted isn't necessarily enough information to make a determination about the project.

Ms. Carron agreed with Ms. Drury's sentiments. She did not think, going by the procedure the HDC is supposed to follow – taking into consideration for demolishing a property – the application is complete. Ms. Carron was of the opinion the application was missing alternatives (aside from the submitted engineering report), what else has been done to try to preserve the house. She questioned if the Applicant tried to find someone to buy the house itself; or move it somewhere. She simply did not see any of that information on the application.

Mr. Primeau explained under the comprehensive permit application he does not bear the responsibility or obligation to try to chop off the lot or have to do this or do that, etc. He mentioned that considering East Greenwich has not dedicated ten percent of its housing inventory to affordable units and he can prove that the subject structure is not structurally sound then he should have the right to continue on.

Ms. Balkcom asserted that was not what Ms. Carron asked. Mr. Primeau said the question was asked if the house could be cut off – that scenario would interfere with the whole presentation he is trying to do with the comprehensive permit.

Ms. Drury answered for Mr. Primeau by saying no – no alternatives have been reviewed yet. Mr. Primeau admitted no alternatives have been reviewed partly due to him not owning the property yet.

Ms. Drury advised that one can still think things through even if you are not the owner.

Ms. Carron noted aside from the engineer's structural report, none of know what other alternatives the Applicant have looked at with regard to the subject house other than getting rid of it. She queried as to what else has been looked

at. Ms. Carron reminded Mr. Primeau that the property is a significantly historical house and a significant house with respect to the Town and just to say because the Applicant is going to construct affordable housing does not carry too much weight. From her perspective she understands the Applicant as saying 'I don't care what significance this house has in this Town, I am going to put in affordable housing, that means affordable housing is more important than whatever contribution this house has made to this Town.'

Mr. Primeau disagreed, commenting the existing house is in a state of deplorable condition.

Ms. Carron said that is a matter of opinion which will be presented in the engineer's report. She added that because the Applicant does not think the house is worth saving, somebody else might think otherwise. Ms. Carron mentioned the Division Street house, in a similar situation that is currently for sale because the owner does not want it and is simply waiting for a potential buyer to come along to either renovate it, move it, etc.

Mr. Primeau retorted the subject property has been on the market for years and no one has come forth.

Ms. Drury said the burden is on the Applicant to show the Commission that all options and alternatives have been explored.

Ms. Carron added that the Division Street house has also been for sale for years; that does not mean that it is not still historically significant to our Town just because the plan is to construct four affordable housing units on the property negates the history behind the property and until she sees that the Applicant has explored other options to preserve the history she did not think the application is complete.

Mr. Primeau inquired as to whether the Commission would like to hear from his structural engineer who was present this evening. Ms. Balkcom said frankly no because if the Commission had an engineer review the same building it would probably not be the same as Mr. Carrigan's report.

Ms. Carron added given the procedure that the HDC is supposed to follow regarding a demolition – the first thing the Commission needs to decide is if the

application is complete. Once the application is complete the HDC can review the application as a whole and then the engineer can be heard and the HDC can go through reports followed by deciding to demolish the house. She was under the impression that hearing from the Applicant's engineer at this point is not something the Commission can take into consideration. Ms. Drury agreed noting hearing from the engineer was premature.

Ms. Hitchen confirmed at this point she will need to have the Town Solicitor discuss the issue with Mr. Primeau's lawyer in order to resolve whether demolition falls under the comprehensive permit statute, RIGL 45-53-4. She was adamant demolition does not apply to this specific law as it only states build or rehabilitate. She advised if the HDC does have purview over demolition then Mr. Primeau will have to revisit the Commission and may still have to revisit the Commission if only for an advisory opinion.

**4. Jerry Zarrella Jr.  
9 Union Street; Map 75 AP 3 Lots 88  
Demolition of 3 existing outbuildings - FINAL**

Ms. Balkcom read Standard #9 into the record as it is applicable to the application. *Standard 9* states demolition, either partial or total, shall only be acceptable provided it would significantly benefit the Town, would serve the greater interest of the community as a whole, and that there are no alternatives to demolition available. Demolitions shall not result in a significant threat or loss of an historic and/or architectural resource to the Town, State or nation.

Mr. Jerry Zarrella Jr. represented the application. Since the last meeting he explained has rethought the process; at this point in time there is no further intention with dealing with 34 Liberty Street and only wants to take into consideration the commercial lot.

Ms. Carron asked if he was no longer purchasing the parcel with the house, only the commercial lot with the two garages. Mr. Zarrella confirmed he was not buying the house lot. He verified that although his original plan was sound he realized he got in too deep and he has decided to source his efforts elsewhere and look at other projects. As far as he is concerned 34 Liberty Street can sit as

long as it needs to and he only has an interest in 9 Union Street, the commercial lot.

Mr. Zarrella explained there was not too much history on 9 Union Street and there was a recent traffic pattern change, making it become a transitional area in his opinion. He submitted additional photos of the two subject structures he has requested to demolish showing the current state of deterioration, adding the photos were taken this afternoon.

Ms. Balkcom indicated she did not have an issue with the demolition of the small shed or either garage considering the deteriorated condition.

Mr. Zarrella highlighted the deteriorated issues those being the following: structures are completely unsecure to the outside; sills are 100 percent rotted; there are no foundations on either garage; the walls are a cardboard material on the hipped roof garage (Mr. Zarrella provided an sample of the cardboard material); the roof structures are structurally unsound; there is a modern day bracing system holding up the hipped roof garage; and finally Mr. Zarrella provided an unaesthetically appealing picture of the exposed side of the eastern elevation that can be seen from Main Street. Mr. Zarrella was convinced that due to not being salvageable, with no foundations and not being secure presents a position in which it is extremely risky for him to move forward to purchase the property without the existing structures being demolished or he could be legally liable if someone got in and hurt themselves.

Mr. Zarrella went on to say the first step in his application process is to remove the existing buildings. At this point he has not put any time or money into what he plans to do further. As his background is in the construction of single-family residential homes Mr. Zarrella anticipates that is what could be built in the garages place.

Ms. Balkcom was curious as to who owns the property. Mr. Zarrella explained there are two separate lots owned by two separate entities – 34 Liberty Street has an existing single family home on it and is owned by Gregg Morris; 9 Union Street is owned by Union Street, LLC in which Gregg Morris is the sole proprietor and is zoned commercial downtown. Mr. Zarrella explained his initial plan was to review the two parcels in its entirety as a courtesy to Mr. Morris who is Wall Street investor and has no intentions of being a developer or ever being a

resident of East Greenwich but when he was met with opposition last month he changed his intentions.

Ms. Balkcom reminded Mr. Zarrella his application was not heard last month due to it not being submitted in time therefore he should not take it personally as it clearly procedural. Mr. Zarrella asserted he has since made a business decision to move on and do something different.

Mr. Zarrella said he would consider moving forward in the direction to do something with the abutting neighbor because it would add value to 9 Union Street but at this point he was simply before the Board for the demolition of the garages and shed.

Ms. Carron inquired as to what Mr. Zarrella was planning to do to the parcel; planning to be commercial, residential, combination of both.

Mr. Zarrella noted the parcel is currently zoned commercial downtown and the original application contained a 2-car garage with a residential unit above as well as a historic dwelling unit that was a recreation of a building in the local area. Essentially it was going to contain three structures, one of the units Mr. Zarrella planned to live in. He added the Planning Department discouraged him from that proposal indicating that was an absurd amount of units. Mr. Zarrella suggested he believes he needs to perform an economic study, a neighborhood study and come back to the HDC but he knows the proposal will look similar to the Vine Street and Piazza Zarrella developments as he did not foresee the property commercial but rather residential because that is his “bread and butter.”

Ms. Hitchen asked if he would consider a two-family/duplex. Mr. Zarrella responded that he is not thinking of anything at the moment and will not go any further with this application until he can take down the existing structures because of the legal risk.

Ms. Calise asserted as an owner there are reasonable steps to take to protect yourself like getting insurance.

Mr. Maxwell asked for clarification if this application was similar to the prior in that the Commission would need to decide if the application is or is not complete. Ms. Hitchen stated the existing structures are considered

secondary/accessory buildings and the Commission may use its discretion to streamline the process as opposed to 62 South Pierce Road. Ms. Drury felt as all three structures were non-contributing structures. Ms. Balkcom stated this application pales in comparison to 62 South Pierce Road.

Ms. Balkcom commented that one of the two garages is mentioned on the historic survey but it is far deteriorated; she did not have an issue with all three structures being demolished. She provided some advice and recommendations to Mr. Zarrella in moving forward with his project – he might not have the right idea of something that would recreate fake history; do not replicate an existing structure; just keep the proposal simple as the design just has to fit in like Piazza Zarrella which is a great addition to Main Street as one can tell it is new construction yet it has evolved and has a nice feel to it with the mixed-use business and residential use. She also suggested that even though Mr. Zarrella has an architectural and construction background it would not hurt to consult with someone who specializes in pocket neighborhood development and advised to not squeeze a lot of units on the lot.

Ms. Drury commented that she did not have any issues with the three outbuildings being razed.

Ms. Balkcom indicated that the next step in the process is to submit a conceptual plan which would provide the HDC and applicant a verbal exchange about the proposal.

Ms. Balkcom asked for a motion.

Ms. Carron made the following findings of fact:

- 1) A written application has been submitted by Jerry Zarrella Jr.
- 2) The property in question is located within the East Greenwich Historic District, specifically 9 Union Street.
- 3) The three structures in question are noncontributing accessory buildings; they are two garages and one shed.
- 4) The out buildings do not contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district.
- 5) The work proposed by the applicant would not affect the character defining elements of the existing building.

Motion by Ms. Carron to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 9 Union Street for demolition. This is consistent with Commission Standard #9.

Seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

VOTE: 5 – 0.

Mr. Zarrella confirmed the project is for him to keep and not to sell and now he will be partnering with Mr. Morris, the abutter who owns the house at 34 Liberty Street regarding a future joint proposal. He requested to see if there was anything that could be done to the existing 34 Liberty Street house.

Ms. Hitchen stated 34 Liberty Street is not on the agenda for discussion but once a proposal is submitted a site visit can be scheduled.

### **Historic District Commission Business**

1. MINUTES: Action on the minutes of the February 8, 2016 meeting.

Tabled until the following month.

2. TAX CREDIT APPROVAL – Len & Susan Curado, 441 Cedar Avenue;  
Map 73 AP 9 Lot 81

Tax credit approved and signed by Commission Chair Balkcom.

3. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/OTHER: Commission members are invited to comment on any observations they have made within the District, ask questions about past approvals, request updates on violations, etc.

No Commissioner comments.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Carron. Seconded by Ms. Calise. Adjourn at 7:05 p.m.

For additional information, please contact the Planning Department.  
Respectfully submitted by:

Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner