

ACTION SHEET
DEMOLITION REVIEW COMMITTEE
PORTSMOUTH, NH
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

6:00 p.m. Committee discussion on the Demolition Ordinance

6:30 P.M.

May 23, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Moreau, Chairman and Planning Board Representative;
Robert Marsilia, Chief Building Inspector (via Conference Call);
Barbara Ward, Portsmouth Historical Society Representative; John
Wyckoff, Historic District Commission Representative; Nicholas
Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Director Designee

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

ALSO PRESENT: Robert Sullivan, City Attorney

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MEETING TO DISCUSS: 400 Little Harbor Road (a.k.a. Carey Cottage)

The Committee discussed whether changes should be made to the Demolition Ordinance. The Committee further discussed potential changes to the demolition review period time-line.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. May 07, 2019 – 400 Little Harbor Road (a.k.a. Carey Cottage)

*The Committee voted unanimously to **approve** the minutes as presented.*

**II. DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION INCLUDING THE
ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Wyckoff shared a letter published in the Portsmouth Herald by resident Paige Trace, suggesting that the City Council should consider whether the Carey Cottage could be used as an arts space in Portsmouth.

III. RESPONSE FROM THE APPLICANT

Jack Savage, Vice President, Communications and Outreach for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests commented on the continuing negotiations between the Forest Society and potential tenants of the Carey Cottage. Mr. Savage explained the criteria for an entity as one with:

1. A track record

2. The funds to renovate Carey Cottage as needed, and
3. An appropriate use that would be acceptable to the trustee

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Several people spoke to, for, or against the demolition of 400 Little Harbor Road (a.k.a. Carey Cottage). The Committee allowed for second and third time speakers to share their input.

V. DECISION AND DISCUSSION OF THE COMMITTEE

*The Committee voted to **delay** the issuance of the demolition permit as long as possible.*

*Mr. Cracknell amended the motion, to **delay** the issuance of the demolition permit for up to the maximum time period allowed under the ordinance of 90 days (which is July 3rd, 2019) and consider 3 potential conditions:*

1. That the Forest Society supply the Committee with written notice on the status of their efforts at the end of the delay period so they had a record as to whether they could preserve the structure.
2. That the Society provide written notice to the Committee if a demolition permit is issued.
3. That the Society document the Carey-Cottage with a HABS survey prior to demolition and submit such report to the City and the Committee for their records.

Ms. Ward made a second amendment to the motion to include the following conditions:

1. Interpretive signage shall be placed on the property indicating Carey Cottage was once there.
2. The Forest Society shall consider leaving some of the foundation and retaining walls as evidence of the building and landscape to connect to the interpretative signage.
3. The Forest Society shall consult with the Portsmouth Advocates on architectural salvage.
4. The Forest Society shall hire a certified arborist to assess the impact of demolition on the Katsura tree.
5. The applicant shall provide an archaeological study.

Mr. Cracknell said the second amendment offered by Ms. Ward was that the foundation piece was a consideration rather than a requirement. He said the requirements should be focused on the interpretative signage, the certified arborist, and the archaeological study. He said the issue of leaving some or all of the building's foundation exposed as well as the option of consulting with the Portsmouth Advocates on architectural salvage efforts should be suggestions rather than requirements. Ms. Ward asked that the architectural salvage be a requirement.

Attorney Sullivan shared which options the Committee could move forward with:

1. Approve the application as submitted.
2. Approve any alternatives to the demolition plan that had been agreed to by the applicant.

3. Delay the issuance of the demolition permit for up to the maximum time period allowed by the ordinance, which was July 3.

Mr. Cracknell said it was not an unreasonable request that the applicant provide written notice on the status of their preservation effort or that in the event that they failed to save the building, when the demolition permit has been issued. He said it was standard policy to do a formal building survey and document the building prior to demolition as well as the interpretative signage. He thought the building foundation piece should be optional for the applicant, and he was comfortable with suggesting the tree arborist given the prior testimony provided from the applicants. He thought the applicant would work with the Portsmouth Advocates but was less certain about the archaeological piece because the site was already significantly disturbed. However, he also reiterated that he did not think everything being considered as a condition of approval should be simply a request. Chair Moreau said they could delay the issuance and that it was not unreasonable for the applicant to get back to them with the status or to ask the applicant to work with the Portsmouth Advocates for the survey and documentation.

VI. DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

After due deliberation, the Committee voted unanimously that the request be delayed for the maximum (90) ninety days under the Demolition Ordinance (which will be up on July, 03, 2019) and requests the following:

1. The applicant should provide written communications to the Committee with information on the results of their recent preservation efforts at the end of the demolition delay period; and
2. In the event the Carey-Cottage is demolished, the applicant should do a full historical survey and documentation of the building.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

*At 8:55 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Izak Gilbo
Planning Department Administrative Clerk