

LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2013
6:00 PM

Chairman Floyd called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Gena Knapp took roll call. Members answering the roll call were Connie Schrombeck, Susan Riley, Martha Burger-Farrellbegg, Ken Floyd, and Clifford Tetrault. Also present was one citizen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg made a motion to approve the October 2, 2012 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Riley and carried by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers – Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg made a motion for Mr. Floyd to remain Chairman, seconded by Ms. Riley and carried by voice vote. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg made a motion for Ms. Schrombeck to remain Secretary, seconded by Ms. Riley and carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Edgar Corns, Lowell Town Council, asked if any of the old buildings have historical value to where they cannot be torn down. Mr. Floyd state if they are unsafe, they can be demolished like the school next door. Ms. Schrombeck asked if Mr. Corns has read the Historic Board's guidelines. Mr. Corns stated that he has not. He stated some of those buildings have not been occupied for the past five years. There are apartments up stairs, but nothing downstairs. He asked if we are just supposed to let them sit, or try to encourage the owners to fix them up. Ms. Schrombeck stated that the owners are supposed to keep up with the buildings. Mr. Tetrault stated that Nelly Jane's building is in foreclosure. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg asked if there is anything that Tiffany Tulbert could help them with. Mr. Floyd stated that particular building should be going up for sale soon. Mr. Tetrault stated that building would probably go up for bank sale. Ms. Schrombeck asked if when selling a building, specific inspections have to pass like plumbing and electricity. Mr. Tetrault stated not in that kind of sale. It will probably just go up for a HUD sale. Ms. Schrombeck stated we might want to look in to if it is under our jurisdiction to make sure that the building is up to code. Mr. Floyd stated the Board's jurisdiction is purely exterior, not interior. They can do whatever they want to the interior of the building. Ms. Riley stated the buildings we are talking about would have to go through the same steps as the school went through to be torn down. Mr. Tetrault stated that was correct, they would have to secure the building, and have all of the documentation in order to demolish it. He stated that particular building was in decent shape about five years ago before it sat. Now there are missing windows and it has sat for about three years with those missing windows. Mr. Floyd stated that the building itself still looks pretty nice. Mr. Tetrault stated he was unsure of the interior.

Mr. Corns stated he was talking more about the buildings across from the Lowell Tribune. A discussion followed about what street he was talking about. Mr. Floyd stated he believed that property is in the process of being purchased. Mr. Corns stated he had spoke with someone from Griffith about a year ago who ran an office supply store, and he said the price of those buildings was too high for the condition it was in. Mr. Floyd stated he spoke with someone who was in the process of purchasing that because they were interested in any grants available for that building. Mr. Tetrault stated currently the man who owns that also owns the apartments across from the old library building. Mr. Corns asked which building Mr. Tetrault was speaking of. Mr. Tetrault stated he was talking about the two buildings just East of Wall Street on the corner where the bike shop used to be. A discussion followed on where Wall Street is, and Ms. Schrombeck stated it was actually Clark Street they were talking about. Mr. Corns stated the brick work on that first building is getting pretty bad and will need work soon. Mr. Floyd stated the issue downtown is if someone wanted to demo a middle building, structurally, the other buildings may not make it. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg stated that might be something we need to look in to. Ms. Riley asked if there were Ordinances that say you have to keep up with your building. Mr. Tetrault stated the biggest hindrance is that for a business, the work has to be done by a licensed contractor. That makes it difficult for those small businesses to do work on their building because it gets expensive. It is not that much to do the work yourself, but when you hire someone, it is eight times more expensive. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg asked if that was a Town Ordinance. Mr. Floyd stated that was correct. Ms. Schrombeck stated the idea is to keep it done right. Mr. Tetrault stated either way inspections have to be done so it should not matter if the owner does it or a contractor does. Ms. Schrombeck stated it was contested when the Town passed that. Mr. Corns stated there was a lot of controversy because Rich Meadows with the carpet shop has done wonders for those two buildings, but he ran in to trouble because he had to have a contractor do the work and he could not afford it. Mr. Floyd stated that is why a lot of people are not doing anything because they cannot afford it. This is something our Town Council needs to talk over. Currently a business cannot even change a door out. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg stated they are bringing it up from the aspect of public safety. Ms. Riley stated whoever is going to bring this up needs to get it on a Town Council agenda. Ms. Burger-Farrellbegg stated she would attend a meeting and bring it up. Ms. Schrombeck stated we are a Board that is supposed to report to the Town Council anyway.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Schrombeck made a motion to adjourn at 6:17 PM, seconded by Ms. Riley and carried by voice vote.

Ken Floyd, Chariman

Connie Schrombeck, Secretary