

**NIAGARA FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**BRETT DOSTER, CHAIRMAN**  
**KRISTIAN RUGGIERO, VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Minutes for June 6, 2024**

A regular meeting of the City of Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 745 Main Street, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

**The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brett Doster, Chairman  
Kristian Ruggiero, Vice Chairman  
Jessica Collins  
Georgia Robinson-Bradberry  
Noah Munoz  
Saladin Allah

STAFF PRESENT:  
Mike Pesarchick, Planner II/HPS

SPEAKERS:  
Elaine Davis,

ABSENT MEMBERS:

None

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA — FOR THIS MEETING**

A motion to approve the agenda with an amendment to add the letter regarding 360 Rainbow Boulevard discussed at the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting on May 2, 2024, under OLD BUSINESS and to add Website questions to NEW BUSINESS, was made by **MR. DOSTER** and seconded by **MR. RUGGIERO**.

Brett Doster	YES
Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Noah Munoz	YES
Saladin Allah	YES

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**MOTION: APPROVED**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held May 2, 2024 was made by **MR. DOSTER** and seconded by **MR. RUGGIERO**

Brett Doster	YES
Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Noah Munoz	YES
Saladin Allah	YES

**MOTION: APPROVED**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (All Non-Agenda Topics)**

There was no public participation.

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. Certificate of Appropriateness: for the project at 731 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Applicant Elaine Davis proposes to repaint existing wood trim around the home and garage, as well as new gutters. Building is a contributing structure within the Park Place Historic District.

Ms. Davis said she would be painting the outside house and garage and replacing gutters. Mr. Doster asked Ms. Davis if she appeared in front of the HPC Board last year for her porch and also asked how it went. She answered yes and that the porch is beautiful. Ms. Davis said she planned to get the painting and replacement gutters completed during the summertime. Mr. Doster stated he was aware the gutters are not original to the home, and asked if the gutters would be the same shape as before. Ms. Davis answered yes and stated she had the original contract. Mr. Doster asked that her contractor take care when power washing and to use low pressure.

A motion to approve with the condition that any wood repairs match the existing size and profile of the property was made by **MR. DOSTER** and seconded by **MR. RUGGIERO**

Brett Doster	YES
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Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Noah Munoz	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Saladin Allah	YES

**MOTION: APPROVED**

2. Certificate of Appropriateness: for the project at 747 Portage Road. Applicant Christine Bacon, on behalf of the Oakwood Cemetery Association, proposes a full flat roof restoration of the circa-1913 mausoleum building with a Modified Bitumen Roof.

Christine Bacon introduced the project and said that the Oakwood Cemetery Association finally had obtained funding to restore some of the buildings at the cemetery, beginning with the mausoleum roof. She said that the next step will be to repair water damage.

Mr. Doster asked if the existing membrane of the roof will be removed. Ms. Bacon said she thought so. Mr. Doster asked if some of the windows were removed. Ms. Bacon replied that someone put in short windows in the atrium, which has impacted the humidity inside. She said this will require work to the internal gutter system and, later, the interior marble.

Mr. Doster asked if there was any interior water damage. Ms. Bacon said there was, especially around the windows. Mr. Doster asked if any windows were being replaced. Ms. Bacon replied not for this application but anticipated that they would be in front of the HPC in the future for additional work. She said there are some Tiffany stained glass inside that is salvageable, some palette damage, rock damage, the building marble needs to be replaced or repaired because it has warped, re-pointing is necessary, the plaster ceiling will need to be scraped and repainted, and the rest of the interior structure is marble and the exterior is granite.

Ms. Bacon stated there is state and county funding for the roof and assuming there is some capital campaign funding, a \$2.5 million in restoration to all three historic structures ultimately making it visitor ready, getting the retort out because of the new retort thanks to Ralph, a new storage facility making the structure code compliant in terms of environmental emissions and then the old retort of 1956 will be able to come out and then restoration of the chapel into a ceremony space or public space for public use again.

Motion to approve the recommendation was made by **MR. DOSTER** and seconded by **MR. ALLAH**

Brett Doster	YES
Kristian Ruggiero	YES
Noah Munoz	YES
Jessica Collins	YES
Saladin Allah	YES

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**MOTION: APPROVED**

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Tatler Club: Update on Tatler Club (6 4<sup>th</sup> Street) nomination to State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Mr. Pesarchick said that a letter was received about a week ago stating the Tatler club is officially on the National Register of Historic Places.

2. CLG Grant and Report: Update on CLG grant cycle which closed on May 31 and update on CLG report for the 2023 Fiscal Year sent to SHPO.

Mr. Pesarchick stated that the CLG grant had been submitted with a report to the grant writer and would be forwarded via email tomorrow, he then apologized for not having copies available for viewing. Mr. Pesarchick also asked if a few HPC members could form a committee to discuss what will be included in the mailers and expressed the reluctance of the administration to send mailers out because of possible interruption of potential projects, however, it is still being worked on internally.

3. Public Education Campaign: Discussion of potential public education campaign on historic preservation efforts in the City.

Mr. Pesarchick reiterated that the HPC should form a committee to propose ideas and uses for the CLG grant, with either outreach material or working with PBN. He also said he was pleased that Ms. Elaine Davis with Oakwood Cemetery was aware of the CLA process resulting in the two COA's because previously there was no contact regarding the Cemetery.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. HPC Membership: Update on Jessica Berry resignation and search for new member.

Mr. Pesarchick said Jessica Berry has resigned due to personal matters and is no longer a member of the HPC. He then said we are initiating a search for a new member for HPC and the Planning Board which took precedent at City Council.

2. Website Questions:

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Mr. Doster asked if the website was still under construction. Mr. Pesarchick responded it was and asked if what was missing from the HPC section, because he was aware that bylaws and recent minutes were missing under the Planning Board.

Mr. Doster replied that the updated HPC bylaws were missing. He asked that the Local Historic Register be added as well as the City's Historic Preservation Law. Mr. Pesarchick said he would work on adding them and explained the files are large, however they can be made available through a SharePoint link. He asked if there was anything else that should be on the website. The Commission concurred with Mr. Doster.

**PLANNING AND HISTORIAN REPORT (Communications)**

**OTHER ITEMS**

Mr. Pesarchick said Big L Windows and Doors was working at 650 Park Place, the old First Church of Christian Science, to replace the basement windows with Marvin Infinity windows. He said the applicant is aware of the need for a COA and that they had experience with the Buffalo Preservation Commission. He said that they were not looking to replace the stained glass.

Mr. Pesarchick reported that the owner of 1916 Main Street, the former Kresge Five and Dime store, had received a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant to restore the façade. He said the owner wished to illuminate the façade for his customers entering at night and that there were challenges to this. Mr. Pesarchick said he recommended to the applicant that LED lights be installed behind the middle cornice to illuminate the top of the façade. He added that the building was not on the Local Historic Register.

Mr. Allah asked if the owner was proposing to repair the boarded-up windows. Mr. Pesarchick said the owner was, and was also looking at minor masonry repair, roof repairs, and upgrades to the climate control system.

Mr. Doster asked if the owner had started the repairs. Mr. Pesarchick said that the repairs could not begin until SHPO reviewed the proposal and approved it. He added that the owner is seeking lighting suggestions and asked if the HPC had any additional recommendations. Mr. Doster said that whatever is the least intrusive so that the building is not modified. Mr. Pesarchick said this would rule out external fixtures. He added that the owner wished to have some sort of displays in the windows.

Mr. Allah asked if the DRI funding was from the City. Mr. Pesarchick said it was state money managed by the City through the Small Projects Grant Fund. Mr. Doster asked if that's why the City had the authority to comment. Mr. Pesarchick said that was correct, though the project ultimately would be approved by SHPO.

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Mr. Pesarchick said another historic project that won DRI funding was restoration work at 1019 Niagara Avenue, the oldest firehouse building still standing in the City. He said if all goes well, it will be the new headquarters for Dragonfly Jams and Jellies. Mr. Doster asked if the building is locally registered yet. Mr. Pesarchick stated not yet, but the owner is open to having it recognized as a local historic building.

Mr. Pesarchick and the rest of the HPC went on to discuss other buildings eligible for DRI grants and properties they would like to see restored as well as the possibility for retrieving Blue Cardinal properties from Bank On Buffalo for stabilization purposes.

Mr. Pesarchick said that 1919 Whirlpool Street, the former Pharaoh's nightclub, was slated for demolition. He said that it was built in the 1860s as a residential building in the Italianate style and had been significantly altered over the years for various restaurants. Mr. Doster asked if the building was burnt out. Mr. Pesarchick said that was correct and there was a significant fire in 2003. The building was denied historic designation because of the alterations and loss of integrity.

Mr. Doster asked if the owner had been notified. Mr. Pesarchick said the owner would be notified as part of the process. Mr. Munoz said the property is on the market right now for around \$499,000.

The HPC went on to discuss various different properties in the vicinity of Pharaoh's that they would like to see restored. Mr. Pesarchick congratulated Ms. Robinson-Bradberry on the National Register for the Tater Club.

Ms. Robinson-Bradberry asked about the public education campaign. Mr. Pesarchick said that Mr. Forma thought it would be beneficial for the committee to draft some information for the mailer or maybe go beyond that and have an open house night or information session. Ms. Robinson-Bradberry stated that the real need is to let people know exactly what preservation is to better inform the public and protect buildings better.

Mr. Doster asked for a motion to adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by **MR. DOSTER** and seconded by **MR. MUNOZ**.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.**