

Stratham Demolition Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2018

9:00 AM

7 Bunker Hill Ave.

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Present: David Canada, Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell

Absent: Dana Dowling, Fred Emanuel

Guests: Shanti Wolph, Code Enforcement Officer / Building Inspector

CONVENED: 9:05 am by Mr. Canada

Mr. Canada noted that due to the property's age of 47 years, the Demolition Review Committee does not have the legal authority to trigger a 60-day delay period. However, the property is of historic significance to the Town, and the fact that it was donated to the Town is further evidence of that fact. It is a large, estate-like property consisting of 11-acres and a sprawling large home set on a high point of the rolling land, set back nicely from Bunker Hill and Portsmouth Avenues. It is a prominent location near the geographic center of town, and directly across the street from the current Municipal Center (and former elementary school).

Mr. Merrill noted that the home was built in 1971 by John & Marilyn Flynn, a prominent local family that was very active in the community. John Flynn was a partner in the Bell & Flynn Corporation. Marilyn Flynn was active in the women's civic organization (Unity Club) and other town groups. They were financially very successful, and Mr. Merrill surmised that when this property was developed it was likely the most expensive/valuable home in Stratham.

The DRC members and Town CEO/BI toured the house in its entirety, from attic to basement. Aside from one small area of water damage in the kitchen from an apparent leak in the roof, the house appeared to be in excellent condition. The structure and its finishes appear to have been built of high quality materials with a high level of craftsmanship.

The group was of unanimous agreement that demolition of the property would be a significant loss of historic and environmental resources, as well as economic value.

Ms. Mitchell made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Merrill:

1. The DRC will issue its findings to the Board of Selectmen at its next meeting.

2. We recommend that a public hearing should be held prior to any final decision regarding demolition.
3. The Heritage Commission should have the opportunity to view the property, discuss this matter, and make an advisory recommendation to the BOS prior to any final decision regarding demolition.
4. We request that the Heritage Commission be granted permission to hold a public open house at the property prior to any demolition.
5. We request that the Heritage Commission be granted permission to seek salvage options for components of the home.
6. We suggest that the Conservation Commission should be given the opportunity to evaluate this demolition proposal for its potential natural resource consequences.
7. We request that the Heritage Commission be granted permission to remove any remaining papers and documents from the house to offer to the Stratham Historical Society for their archives.

Vote is unanimous in favor.

It was agreed that Mr. Canada and Ms. Mitchell shall have the authority to execute any of the work noted above, as appropriate, on behalf of the DRC.

Mr. Wolph inquired if all demolition permit applications should be sent to the DRC. It was agreed that any proposed major demolition of all or a large portion of any significant structure should be sent to the DRC chair for review, regardless of age. Smaller demos of garages, decks, or remodeling do not need to be passed along unless the structure is greater than 50 years old.

ADJOURNED: 9:47 am

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Mitchell