

FRANKLIN HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023 at 6:00 P.M.
Franklin Public Library – 310 Central Street

- ❑ **Call to Order – 6:00 p.m.**
- ❑ **Salute to the Flag – led by Member Lucas**
- ❑ **Attendance** – Chairman Glen Feener; Bob Lucas; Tim Stangroom; Councilor Paul Trudel; Colby Morrill; Alternate Leigh Webb (not seated); Alternate Joya Pinkham Clark (not seated); Planning Director Seth Creighton; Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant Judy Bibbins.
- ❑ **Approval of Minutes of the September 18, 2023 Public Meeting of the Board.**
Member Morrill made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Member Stangroom. Member Pinkham Clark pointed out an error in the spelling of her name. Correction was noted. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**
- ❑ **New Business:**

H 23-09: Franklin Power, LLC, owner, is seeking approval to demolish the building at 38 East Bow Street, Map/lot number 117-319-00.

Ryan Miller, representative for Eagle Creek, LLC (owner) spoke to the application. He explained there had been safety concerns and property maintenance issues brought to their attention by the City. He said they believed there were a number of issues with making the building usable and they were cost prohibitive. He also believed that Federal Regulations would not permit them as a utility to subdivide the lot and sell the piece with this building on it. As the building was too expensive to repair and did not serve a purpose for them, the applicant was requesting they be permitted to demolish the building to satisfy the City's concerns with safety and property maintenance.

The Commission asked many questions about the condition of the building, actual costs to make it safe versus making it usable, why they own it if it serves no function, and how much effort they exerted into looking into selling the building in order to preserve the historic structure.

Mr. Miller explained that it was the applicant's belief that Federal Regulations would not permit them to sell it. He also shared that they believed the needed repairs would cost more than the demolition.

The Commission continued to stress the importance of the building, historically, in that it is the last brick building association with the mills on that side of the river. They also pressed for confirmation that the federal regulations prohibited the sale. Mr. Miller explained there are costs associated with the federal application to look into it.

Chairman Feener opened the meeting to public comment. Steve Larkin, owner of abutting property, spoke to Commission that he had made multiple offers to purchase the building. As the owner of the abutting property, he has a vested interest in the restoration of the building and stressed that the offers still stand. Annette Andreozzi also spoke against the demolition of the structure and requested the Commission continue the application without prejudice. Director Creighton read a letter from Jim Jones also requesting the Commission deny the request to demolish the structure as he has also offered to purchase it and see the public value in preserving the building whether or not he buys it.

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Chairman Feener closed the public comment and brought the discussion back to the Commission. Several members suggested continuing the application. Director Creighton gave a summary of the issues, lack of progress from the owner to work with the City, their lack of supporting documentation for demolition and that he has spoken to a representative from Federal Energy Regulation Commission (FERC) and confirmed that it is possible to subdivide the property to preserve an historic building. He also shared other options including condo conversion or landlord as opposed to demolition.

Councilor Trudel made a motion to deny the application for the reasons outlined in the staff memo, items 1-3. Motion was seconded by Member Stangroom. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**

□ **Other Business:**

The members had a discussion about whether the Trestle Bridge project should come before the Commission. Director Creighton explained what had been voted on by the City Council to raze and rebuild. He also shared updates on the demolition/construction happening at 174 North Main Street and that he had no updates on the Cumberland Farms project.

- **Adjournment:** Councilor Trudel made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Stangroom. Motion carried 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Bibbins
Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant