



## CITY OF HALLOWELL

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PLANNING BOARD

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DATE: May 31, 2016  
TO: Mayor Walker and Members of the Hallowell City Council  
FROM: Members of the Hallowell Planning Board  
SUBJ: Requests from the Planning Board regarding assistance

As relayed to you at the City Council meeting on May 23, the Planning Board requests assistance to obtain training and other appropriate consultation to help us do our job in the best way possible, and also asks the City to establish an ongoing relationship with an individual who has expertise in historic preservation/historic architectural matters. We see an increasing need for this assistance, considering the issues we've had before us during the past several months and looking ahead to more, particularly to the ordinances specific to the Stevens School property.

At the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Mayor Walker noted there has already been discussion about us working with Mark Eyerman, the consultant on the Comprehensive Plan and the current ordinances specific to the Stevens School property, to review those ordinances and their intent. With summer upon us and the Stevens School property now a focal point of attention, we need to get started soon. The ordinances lay out a process, starting with the development of a conceptual master plan, and working through a series of steps, many involving the Planning Board. It should be a priority to have a workshop with Mark, the Planning Board, a Council representative, the CEO and the new City Manager on the Stevens School ordinances. If there is a City Hall contact for the Planning Board, we request that that person reach out to Mark Eyerman; if there isn't a specific contact, a member of the Planning Board could initiate the consultation. Please let us know.

Mayor Walker also said there a suggestion pending for Planning Board members to participate in a training on flood zone issues. We encourage you to initiate contact with whoever can provide the training, so that we can all schedule the time.

We would like to see as many as possible of the City Council members participate in this work along with us, or at the least, a specific and official liaison representing the Council.

We have also talked about developing protocols for working with some of our ordinances (brought into focus with the demolition application for the "blue house"). Another application pointed to the need to have an historic preservation advisor or advisory committee to guide applicants through the system. Experience with other applications has suggested that there is a need to review our application form and processes to clarify what is expected of applicants, particularly in the Historic District. Working with Mark Eyerman may be helpful in an effort to develop such protocols as well.

Also on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Councilor Stearns noted that the Comprehensive Plan (October 2010) proposes establishing an Advisory Historic Commission. Among other activities, the Commission would provide "technical assistance to the Planning Board on historic development standards and, when requested, on individual project reviews within the historic districts" (p. 40)." He asked if we think we need this Commission. The proposed duties of such a commission are much broader than assistance to the Planning Board. If it is needed and how it would relate to the work of the Planning Board is beyond the scope of this letter. We do agree that the current lack of consistent technical assistance in historical matters has been a detriment to our process. The City will need to determine what it would want an Advisory Historic Commission to do. In the meantime, identifying an individual to work with the Planning Board and applicants cannot wait.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.