

THE MINUTES OF THE 306th STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

26 November 1986

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
David Brownlee
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
William Thompson
Christopher Cashman, Deputy Director, Office of the Director
of Commerce
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Rebecca Northrop, Director of Policy and Planning, Office of
Housing
Dudley Sykes, Commissioner, Department of Public Property
David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections
Mark MacQueen, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Sally Elk, Historic Research Technician
Terri Koob, Executive Secretary

Also: Grace Gary, Executive Director, Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania
Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation Coalition of
Greater Philadelphia
Laura M. Shemick, Esq., Law Offices of Sprague, Thall & Creamer
representing Sameric Corporation
And others.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the results of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

Mr. Montgomery welcomed David Brownlee as a new member of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Mr. Montgomery introduced Dr. Brownlee as an Architectural Historian from the University of Pennsylvania who has succeeded Grace Gary as a Commission member and as Chairman of the Commission's Committee on Historic Designation.

THE MINUTES of the 305th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 24 September 1986, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman, were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 9 October 1986, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg reported that the information requested for 2220 Wallace Street and 417 South 8th Street has been received and approvals are now recommended for these two projects. Mr. Hollenberg further reported that the information requested for 41 North 2nd Street and 514 Catherine Street has not been received and these two projects are still pending.

Mr. Hollenberg stated that a correction should be made in the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 9 October 1986 under the 2109 Brandywine Street submission. The report erroneously states that, "The Committee reviewed photographs of the property and recommended that drawings be submitted for a three panel shutter and a six panel door." The corrected sentence should read, "The Committee reviewed photographs of the property and recommended that drawings be submitted for a two or four panel shutter and a four panel door." This additional information requested by the Committee has not been received and the project is still pending.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 9 October 1986 with the inclusion of the approval for 2220 Wallace Street and 417 South 8th Street and the correction in the submission for 2109 Brandywine Street.

THE REPORTS of the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for 15 September - 15 October 1986 and 15 October - 15 November 1986, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer, were reviewed and approved for filing.

OLD BUSINESS

Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street

Mr. Tyler reported that counsel for the owners of the Boyd Theater have requested yet another continuance of the Historical Commission's consideration of the historic designation of the Boyd Theater which is pending from the Report of the Committee on Historic Designation Meeting held on 14 March 1986.

Laura Shemick, representative of the law firm of Sprague, Thall & Creamer, counsel for the owners of the Boyd Theater, addressed the Commission requesting that a continuance be granted based in part on staff changes in the law office and also owing to the approaching holiday season and the accompanying hectic schedules.

Extensive discussion followed concerning the excessive delay caused by the many continuances granted to the owners. Commission members also expressed concern that work may be occurring in the building. When questioned about the possibility of such activity, Ms. Shemick

stated that she was not in a position to make the assurance that no work was being performed; however, she stated that she would make inquiries when she returned to her office and advise the Historical Commission of her findings. Mr. Tyler read a portion of a letter received from J. Shane Creamer of Sprague, Thall & Creamer which states, "As we have assured you previously, Sameric Corporation will not seek a permit to alter the theater at the above address (The Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street), nor will it take any action to demolish it prior to the January meeting." Mr. Tyler suggested that the Commission require site inspections to insure that no work is being done on this building without a permit from the Department of Licenses and Inspections and the Historical Commission's approval. The Commission members agreed that these inspections should be undertaken.

The Commission unanimously voted to grant a continuance on this issue until and not beyond the January 1987 Stated Meeting of the Historical Commission contingent upon the following:

- 1) two inspections of the building - one as soon as possible and the other inspection in January;
- 2) representatives of the Boyd Theater will meet with the Historical Commission staff to discuss their intentions and the reasoning behind the numerous delays; and,
- 3) the Historical Commission reserves the right to call a special meeting to evaluate the situation should any on-going work be detected or any need of maintenance necessary for the preservation of the building be required.

NEW BUSINESS

Policy Statement on Maintenance Clause (8)(c) of Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that a clarification of the wording of Section (8)(c) of Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code is necessary in order to establish an Historical Commission policy concerning its intention to prevent demolition by neglect and not to require restoration. To achieve this clarification, Mr. Tyler presented for the Commission's approval a policy statement prepared in consultation with the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation. The policy statement reads as follows: "Every historic building, structure and object and every building, structure and object located within an historic district shall be kept in such a state of repair as to maintain its structural soundness and safety, and to prevent structural failure through neglect."

The Commission unanimously voted to approve this policy statement.

Designation of Mary T. Koob as a Signatory of the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund

Mr. Tyler requested that Mary T. Koob be added as a signatory to the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund along with Patricia Siemiontkowski and himself.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve this request.

Resolution of Grace Gary

Mr. Montgomery read a resolution prepared in recognition of Grace Gary who resigned the Commission owing to her appointment as Executive Director of the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania and her move to Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Commission unanimously approved the adoption of this resolution which was presented to Grace Gary at today's meeting. A copy of this resolution is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Mr. Montgomery presented Ms. Gary with a replica of the Liberty Bell as a token of appreciation from the City of Philadelphia and the Historical Commission members for Ms. Gary's contribution to historic preservation in the city.

Ms. Gary thanked the Commission for its thoughtful presentations and, in turn, delivered a statement expressing her gratitude for having been a member of the Historical Commission. A copy of Ms. Gary's presentation is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Koob
Executive Secretary

RESOLUTION

Whereas, Grace Gary, as Director of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as a preservationist and as a Philadelphian, assisted in the shaping and passage of the City's new historic preservation ordinance through her testimony before City Council and liaison with community organizations, and

Whereas, Grace Gary was the first person appointed to the Commission as Architectural Historian by Mayor W. Wilson Goode and served as the first chair of the Committee on Historic Designation, and

Whereas, Grace Gary brought knowledge of architectural history, preservation and process with wit and commitment to the Commission, and

Whereas, Grace Gary played a significant role in making the presence of the National Trust real in Philadelphia, and Philadelphia real to the National Trust, and

Whereas, Grace Gary has resigned her place on the Commission to become Executive Director of the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania.

Therefore, we the members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission extend to Grace Gary our appreciation for her service and contribution to the work of this Commission and to preservation in Philadelphia.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a statement as a former Commission member. I have been active in preservation for a number of years and through my employment with the National Trust have worked with and observed preservation efforts for sixteen years.

My tenure with the Philadelphia Historical Commission, however, was my first opportunity to participate directly on a personal level in local decision making. I was initially flattered by my appointment but did not sufficiently appreciate the honor of the appointment until I had served a few months.

It is a great responsibility to be involved in decisions affecting the physical appearance of a great city like Philadelphia and it is very rewarding to feel that you are working toward the common good by helping to protect our rich treasury of important buildings and places. But I quickly came to realize that a large part of the honor of being a Commissioner comes from the company one keeps.

I knew many of you before joining the Commission but I knew you as faces across the table at public hearings, pleasant companions at receptions and voices over the telephone. During the last year and a half of working together I have come to know you better and my respect for you has grown immeasurably.

I believe that this Commission, its staff and the two chairmen I have known have displayed an uncommon dedication, commitment and high level of integrity. I believe that you have shown extraordinary good judgment, coolness under fire and strong support for "the cause" in reaching several difficult decisions.

It is unusual enough to find these attributes in appointed Commissioners but it is even more unusual in ex-officio representatives. In too many communities their service is lukewarm and lackadaisical. I believe that one of the great strengths of this Commission and of our city is that that cannot be said of you.

I have grown by my association with you all; I learned much from you; and, perhaps more importantly, I enjoyed working with you.

I hope that the city and the preservation community realize how lucky they are to have you.

By: Grace Gary

Presented to: The Philadelphia Historical Commission
306th Stated Meeting - 26 November 1986