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MINUTES OF THE 161st STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

30 November 1971

Present: Charles R. Tyson, Chairman of the Commission
Richmond P. Miller, Vice-Chairman of the Commission
Edward Pinkowski
John Taxin
Henry J. Magaziner, Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Isador Kranzel, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
James L. Ferguson, Deputy Director of Finance
Walter A. Brown, Administrative Analyst, Department of Public Property
Hon. John B. Kelly, Jr., Councilman-at-Large
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Patricia Sienionkowski, Secretary

Also: Chester J. Cincotta, Vice President of the Bankers' Security Corporation
I. I. Jamison, attorney for the Bankers' Security Corporation
Mr. Stuma, representative of Harry Krevolin, Inc.

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

THE MINUTES for the Stated Meeting 26 October 1971 were approved and directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The report of the Architectural Committee for November 9, 1971 was approved as circulated.

The Commission agreed that the following buildings be approved for certification:

700-08 North Fifth Street -
Dropsie College, Broad and York Streets
St. Paul's Church, Tenth and Christian Streets
St. Mary Magdalene's Church, 718 Montrose Street
1109 Walnut Street

Mr. Kelly asked to be recorded as voting against the North Fifth Street houses being certified.

The Commission's Activities, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian.
The report on office activities for the past month was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

2032 Walnut Street, John Wanamaker House. The Commission welcomed Mr. Cincotta, Mr. Jamison, and Mr. Sturm and asked that they present their position to the Board. Mr. Jamison began by stating that Mr. Sturm came to the Historical Commission office on June 10, 1971 with an application for a demolition permit for this property. This statement and Mrs. Maurer's letter of June 28, 1971 were presented as evidence that the Historical Commission knew of the proposed demolition. It was, therefore, the opinion of Mr. Jamison and Mr. Cincotta that the Commission's six month withholding period had expired and that the application for demolition should now be approved. The Commission was assured that any salvage from the Wanamaker House will be given to the city if wanted.

The Chairman replied that the only formal application for demolition of which the Commission has knowledge was received on November 23, 1971.

Mr. Magaziner brought up the matter of the transfer of the development rights from the John Wanamaker House to the adjacent property. Mr. Cincotta did not believe this to be a feasible solution to their problem and stated that the developers who were interested in the property did not want to purchase the Wanamaker House as such, but only the ground on which it stands. Mr. Magaziner, speaking as Chairman of the Preservation Committee of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, offered that committee's services to try to find a way to save the Wanamaker House and erect an economically viable structure on the adjoining property.

Mr. Kranzel asked that the Historical Commission be supplied with the statistics relative to the cost of the operation of the Wanamaker house so that a rational decision could be arrived at in this matter. Mr. Tyson added the hope that the owner will cooperate as much as possible with the Historical Commission and agreed that the Commission in turn will see that a decision is arrived at promptly.

The gentlemen were excused from the meeting room.

Subsequently, the following two resolutions were unanimously approved:

1. That the application for demolition of the John Wanamaker House at 2032 Walnut Street be withheld for a period not in excess of six months.

2. That the Historical Commission through the offices of each of its members do everything possible in the next six months to try to save the Wanamaker House through contacts with building corporations, business and financial institutions, foundations, etc.

Note was made that forms nominating the building for a place on the National Register of Historic Places have been reviewed in Washington and that this fact should be announced shortly. Mr. Magaziner pointed out that Register status will make the house eligible for HUD money for restoration, and added that this should make the retention of the building more feasible for any developer.

A motion was also made that the Historical Commission ask Congressman Byrne to introduce a bill into the House recommending that the United States Department of the Interior acquire the John Wanamaker House. This was also unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Change of day for Stated Meetings. It was approved that the Historical Commission's Stated Meeting shall hereafter be scheduled for the first Thursday of each month.

Date of next Meeting: The next Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission shall be held on January 6, 1972.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Sienicki
Secretary