



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 3, 2020

Members Present: Jack LeMenager (Chair), Bruce Hickey, John Clemson, Emily Dowling, Jon Carlisle

Absent: Janet Boswell, Jenny Adams

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
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A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm.

Massachusetts Historical Commission Conference Call

John Clemson briefed the Commission on a conference call that he participated in the prior week regarding efforts and funding to conduct survey work on a number of properties in town. The work would be led by Claire Dempsey and would likely focus predominantly on a mid-century subdivision near the Muraco School and Leonard Field. Among the contributing historical aspects of the area is that it once hosted a number of farms in town. Ms. Dempsey had indicated to Mr. Clemson that she would like the Commission to look at the proposed review area to see if its members agree with the review locations and Area Forms. Mr. Clemson said that he and/or Ms. Dempsey would transmit this information to members of the Commission for review.

Budget Discussion with Town Manager

Chairman LeMenager detailed a meeting that he and Mr. Clemson had with Town Manager Lisa Wong to discuss, among other items, the Historical Commission's proposed budget. Overall, Mr. LeMenager said that Ms. Wong seemed to think that the budget was reasonable and that the funding generated from demolition permit fees has been a fruitful. She had asked whether a fee increase was needed, but Mr. LeMenager said he'd recommended waiting for at least another year before considering that in order to gather additional data.

Manager Wong also brought up an RFQ related to the Waterfield Lot and indicated that she wanted the Historical Commission to be involved in the ultimate development of this parcel. She said that it would be appropriate for a member of the Commission to serve on the committee that would develop the RFP at the appropriate time and then review the submissions. There is a related meeting on the Waterfield Lot on Monday, the 10th of February, and several Commission members said that they would endeavor to attend. The Commission agreed to appoint Mr. LeMenager as its representative to the committee.

Historical Commission Website

A discussion ensued on how best to equip the WHC website to display survey information for residents to review, as well as additional relevant information. Mr. Clemson pointed to the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s website, where he said interested parties could get such information with only a property’s address and suggested we should model our approach after that. He said that the existing functionality of the WHC website only brings users to an Area Form, not a specific property. Mr. Szekely suggested that an initial step could be to include information instructing users on how to use MACRIS. The Commission recognized that there may be some near-term technological challenges with achieving a fully functional website, but that it should explore some potential interim steps that would improve available information as it works toward that ultimate goal. Mr. LeMenager asked Commission members to study the webpage and come to the next meeting with ideas and recommendations for its improvement.

Rangeley Heritage District Committee – 9 Meadowcroft

Residents of 9 Meadowcroft have expressed an interest in becoming part of the Rangeley Heritage District Committee. To do so, they would need a Form B survey, which would likely cost approximately \$500. A motion was introduced by Mr. Carlisle and seconded by Ms. Dowling:

Motion That the Historical Commission fund up to \$500 for the Form B work related to 9 Meadowcroft, noting that incorporation into the Heritage District would ultimately need to be approved by Town Meeting.

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 2 Absent (Adams and Boswell) VOTED

Definition of “Substantial” Demolition

Mr. Szekely detailed a conversation that he had had with Building Commissioner Al Wile regarding the definition of “substantial” demolition. He said that Mr. Wile had concerns about some aspects of the Commission’s draft definition (see attached), specifically citing that it may be too open-ended and that it would impact some projects that he considered to be routine maintenance.

Wile said that he had concerns with the entirety of the second bullet in the definition and that routine maintenance projects could be inappropriately affected. He also had concerns about the third bullet, citing as an example the potential unintended consequences that the “removal of more than one exterior wall” language might have on an L-shaped building.

A motion was introduced by Mr. Hickey and seconded by Mr. Clemson:

Motion To send the language as presently drafted to Town Counsel for review and feedback, along with copies to the Town Manager and Building Department for further comment.

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 2 Absent (Adams and Boswell) VOTED

Hearing Procedures

Chairman LeMenager said that, predicated on events at past demolition delay hearings, there is a need to tighten up the related proceedings. He produced a hearing script that has been used as a model for many years and suggested that a more diligent adherence to its dictates (e.g., having questions directed only to the Chair). The implementation of audience member speaking time limits was also discussed as a way to make such hearings more equitable for all parties involved. Mr. Szekely said that there are some aspects related to Planning Board hearings that could be incorporated as a way to accomplish this goal, and he volunteered to review the Commission’s existing script and to potentially make some minor changes.

Main Street Bridge Renovation

During the chair’s Jan. 24 meeting with Town Manager Wong, the project to renovate the Main Street Bridge adjacent to the Public Safety buildings was discussed. While formal comment is not presently required or solicited from the Historical Commission, Mr. Clemson noted that the existing concrete railings and abutments are part of the original design and that there could be a strong push to maintain that design element as the project further progresses.

Historic Renovation Award Proposal

Chairman LeMenager re-raised the idea of implementing a Historic Renovation Award program, specifically citing the work done at 10 Lawrence Street. The Commission was supportive of the idea. It was noted that it might be ill-advised to make it a yearly award, but rather one that is granted periodically to appropriate and worthy projects.

January 6, 2020 Minutes

Motion That the Historical Commission approve the minutes of the January 6, 2020 meeting. The motion was made and seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 2 Absent (Adams and Boswell)
VOTED

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2020

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:50 pm.

VOTED

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Carlisle, Recording Secretary



Jack LeMenager, Chair

March 3, 2020

Date

REGULATION 14.2.6(a)

“DEMOLITION”

At a meeting of the Winchester Historical Commission on February 3, 2020 and pursuant to Section 4.4 of Chapter 14 of the Town of Winchester Code of By-laws (“Chapter 14”), the following regulation was adopted for purposes of interpreting the concept of a demolition of “substantially all” of a Building contained in Section 2.6(a) of Chapter 14 (capitalized terms used herein shall have the respective meanings set forth in Chapter 14):

14.2.6(a). The demolition of substantially all of a Building shall mean one or more of the following:

- The removal of a Building’s roof or roofing materials (shake or slate; asphalt tab being exempt);
- The complete removal of any of the following exterior architectural features of a Building:
 - clapboards or other cladding,
 - exterior moldings and trim,
 - sheathing boards, or
 - doors, windows and their frames; and
- the removal of more than one exterior wall of a Building,

provided, however, if the Applicant replaces the foregoing with material that is in-kind, or such removal or alteration affects a portion of the building which is not viewable from a public way, such removal or alteration shall not be deemed a demolition of substantially all of the Building.