



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

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 2, 2020

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair; John Clemson; Emily Dowling; Jon Carlisle; Janet Boswell; and Jennifer Adams.

Absent: Bruce Hickey, Vice Chair

Also Present: Claire Dempsey; Holly Palmgren, MBTA; Wendy Frontiero, BETA Group, Inc.; Mark Thompson, Jacobs Engineering; Brian Szekely, Town Planner; Savannah Villaba, Assistant to the Town Planner; Richard Leaf; Michael Cima; Tina Cortesi; and Dennis Dale.

A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

Review of MBTA Historic Assessment Of Train Station Project – Ms. Palmgren came before the Commission to ask for our concurrence with the findings contained in a report prepared on behalf of the MBTA by BETA Group, Inc. and Jacobs Engineering, which concludes that the planned renovation of the train station will have “No Adverse Effect” on surrounding historical assets.

Mr. Thompson explained that the new platforms would be raised 4 feet above the top of the rail (increasing platform elevation to 20 feet from the sidewalk). Passengers boarding and disembarking trains will not encounter any stairs, ramps will be fully ADA compliant, and there will be two new elevators. Total platform length will accommodate a 9-car train, which is standard for the MBTA and designed to allow a train empty completely in 6 minutes. A pedestrian bridge will span the distance from the platform to Shore Road with a canopy of painted galvanized steel and galvanized steel railings.

Chair LeMenager asked whether or not, at 90% design, the MBTA plans to reuse the existing granite facing on the viaduct on the Town Common side. Ms. Palmgren indicated that it does. Mr. LeMenager commented that it has been an issue of concern raised frequently during public meetings.

Regarding MCH Form F commissioned in 2017 by Epsilon, Mr. Clemson noted that it recommended that the station not be considered “contributing to the National Register Historic District.” He suggested that the form be expanded to note that the railroad has bisected the town for 200 years prompting ongoing discussion about how to deal with traffic and pedestrian safety, adding that the station is a striking expression of mid-century architecture that has become an important feature of the town.

Public Questions/Comments:

Dennis Dale, an architect, had numerous concerns involving:

- Tree removal along the large stretch on both sides of the track in the rotary. These are 50-75 year old flowering trees and landscape architects had minimal input on the plan before the 90% set point;
- The glass structures enclosing the two elevators are out of keeping with every structure in town (and the “T” sign is inconsistent with town bylaws prohibiting backlit signs in the downtown);
- The area where most pedestrians walk will be clad in exposed aggregate or faux stone;
- The tower will loom over and be incongruous with The Black Horse tavern and the Post Office;
- Clear glass attracts birds and will lead to bird deaths.

Mr. Thompson responded that an ADA-related lawsuit has resulted in the requirement that every part of an MBTA elevator tower be viewable. He added that there is an upcoming 90% design meeting on Wednesday night, March 4th, at McCall Middle School where additional public comment will be welcome.

Mr. LeMenager asked about the landscaping plans for the traffic circle. Mr. Thompson responded that the MBTA will remove everything and it will be up to the town to decide what to do with the space after the project is complete.

Ms. Palmgren requested our concurrence about their findings as soon as possible, which will go to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

It was moved by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Ms. Adams, and unanimously voted to ask Mr. Clemson to draft a response to the MBTA.

Board of Appeals petitions

- 184 Mystic Valley Parkway – The owners request a special permit to construct an addition closer to the side property line than as of right and not in accordance with open space requirements. The subject property is smaller than others on the street. The addition, which would add a little over 700 feet, would be on the back and not visible from the street. It would enlarge the small kitchen, and add a family room and master suite. The total bedroom count would stay the same. The Assessor’s database indicates that the existing house is 1,880 feet. Only five homes in the area are below 2,000 feet. The lot size is 6,296 feet and the proposed addition would be too close to right side property line and about 3% over lot coverage. The house dates to 1911 and the proposed project maintains the façade that faces the street.

After discussion, it was moved by Ms. Boswell, seconded by Mr. Clemson and unanimously voted to find that the proposed addition had no adverse impact on historical resources.

- 12 Lockeland Road – special permit to construct an addition closer to side line than as of right.

After discussion it was moved by Mr. Clemson, seconded by Mr. Carlisle and unanimously voted that the proposed addition had no adverse impact on historical resources.

Proposed Alternative MHC Form – Ms. Dempsey described her thought process about proposed changes to the Area Form. The form without pictures would only be used in areas with a lot of buildings that look exactly the same. She would like the Commission to weigh in on whether or not this format change would

be helpful. The response should go to Michael Steinitz, at Mass Historical Commission. Mr. LeMenager will prepare a draft.

“Substantial” Demolition Follow-Up – After reviewing proposed language, Town Counsel recommended the Commission have further discussion. Mr. LeMenager suggested we postpone that until Vice Chair Hickey is present.

Addition of 9 Meadowcroft to the Rangeley Heritage District – Ms. Dempsey said the Commission needs to have a B form done for the property prior to the next Town Meeting, which will have to approve this addition to the district. Mr. Clemson commented that the Commission had approved the funding for this work at its previous meeting. March 13th is the closing of the Town Meeting warrant. The form needs to be completed 2-3 weeks after the warrant closes.

Hearing Procedures Follow-Up – no further discussion

HC Website Update – Mr. LeMenager led a discussion of the Commission’s website and the updates needed. He noted:

- We need a working email addresses for everyone on the Commission
- We should add a link to the MCRIS user guide and the YouTube Video on the subject
- Old surveys are currently available in the library in local history section
- We should add some of our recent survey language and encourage users to go to MACRIS for comprehensive survey info.

Waterfield Lot Update – Mr. Szekely said he had no real updates. He will meet with Mass Housing and the Town Manager tomorrow and then assemble a group that will write the Request For Proposals.

Historic Renovation Award – Chair LeMenager reminded those present that the exemplary project at 10 Lawrence Street initially spurred our consideration of creating an award to recognize owners, developers and/or architects who through renovation and rehabilitation save historic Winchester properties and preserve their unique character. There was general agreement that the Commission should proceed with the creation of such an award and Commissioner Boswell volunteered to design a certificate. Commissioner Carlisle suggested that projects should not be limited to properties constructed prior to 1941.

It was moved by Ms. Boswell, seconded by Mr. Carlisle and unanimously voted to create a Historic Renovation Award along the lines proposed by Mr. LeMenager but without the 1941 construction cutoff date.

February 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Clemson moved, Ms. Dowling seconded and it was unanimously voted that the Historical Commission approve the minutes of the February 3, 2020 Meeting as presented.

Other matters

Sanborn Carriage House – Mr. Clemson and Mr. LeMenager attended the most recent School Committee Meeting at which they learned that \$5-8 Million would be needed for major renovations in order to move the administrative offices into the building. The School Committee voted to postpone further consideration of the project until a future date.

Local Historic Districts – The Commission’s next step is to meet with the Select Board on March 23rd. Representatives will report that they had a meeting a week ago with the Study Committee. At this time, it is uncertain whether zoning regulations in the center are going to be changed and whether there is interest in creating a town-wide historic district. It is also unclear what needs to be changed within current zoning to mesh with Local Historic District zoning.

There was brief discussion about how to allocate our appropriation of \$15,000 that would have been a match for state funding the Commission did not receive this year.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 6, 2020

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Boswell, Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. LeMenager', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jack LeMenager, Chair

07/02/2020

Date