



ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes February 9, 2022, 7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Bill Dickinson (BD) - Chair, Bob Ferrara (BF), Bill Klauer (BK), Alissa Nicol (AN) - Clerk, Barb Rhines (BR) - Planning Division, Victoria Beyer (VB), Fran Arsenault (FA) - Select Board Liaison

Guests: Anne Forbes (AF), Tom Tidman (TT), Andy Brockway (AB)

Absent: none

Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM, and read the procedures and agreed-on policies the Town developed for these web-based Zoom meetings. Now that the Mass. Legislature has extended the open meeting pandemic rules about using Zoom vs. in-person meetings, the AHC will continue with Zoom meetings indefinitely until there is consensus about returning to in-person meetings.

I. Regular Business

1) Approval of January Minutes – Meeting minutes from the AHC's January meeting were reviewed; BF moved and BK seconded a motion to approve the minutes; the minutes were approved unanimously with a minor edit by a vote of 4-0 (BK joined following the approval of the meeting minutes).

2) Citizen Concerns: none

3) Any ZBA/Planning Board projects on the CRL: BK reports application for subdivision at 76 Willow Street on PB agenda for 2/15 has been withdrawn, BR will confirm that HC is on shell for Land Use Project Review emails

4) Bridge Project between Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and TTT: BD reports surveyor completed work and sent invoice which will be forwarded to Town for reimbursement;

currently building the design team; AF asks whether the project includes plans for any new panels or updates to inventory forms; BD notes none as of now, but could be added to next phase; AF notes issues with panel at EAV Green as well as materials donated from Bellows Farm (Davis family ledgers and diaries donated to AHS and other materials donated to Concord Museum); AF and Larry Sorli (Curator at Concord Museum) are working on documentation, MACRIS inventory forms are badly in need of updating, mistakes on Brook St forms, lack of documentation for associated buildings; BD offers support from HC budget (materials, printing, etc.)

5) Archaeological By-Law Update: BF reports continued work with Planning staff, BR has helped to complete survey which is being distributed to stakeholders (all Town boards and committees, Pine Hawk, social media handles, etc.), 70 responses received so far; a second Public Forum is being planned for March as well as a Select Board presentation; BD notes importance for by law to be integrated seamlessly into current permitting process and a land disturbance hierarchy has been established of 15,000 square feet for high sensitivity areas and 1 are for moderate sensitivity areas - called archaeological protection district areas 1 & 2; maybe a bigger role for Town if a find is made on the land during initial arch review; AN reports viewing the video recording of the November Public Forum and suggests a few changes to language - "land/property owner" instead of "developer" and "homeowner," "archaeological find" instead of "problem," "project" instead of "development"

6) 53 River Street Update - no update on Memorandum of Understanding

7) Status of Converting CRL to MACRIS: BR notes resources/elements missing from both CRL (typed list) and MACRIS, possible need for volunteer assistance, will reach out to BK, discrepancies in roughly 1/3 of items, will verify 1997 typed list is most recently updated version

8) Discuss Open Space and Recreation Plan: AN reports that HC member comments made during January meeting have been forwarded to Melissa Rier and that an upcoming public forum will provide further opportunity for comment

II. New/Special Business

- 1) Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel renovation discussion** - Andy Brockway engaged by Town in summer '21 to complete a feasibility study; chapel is Gothic Revival built in 1937, exterior granite and slate roof, donated to Town; feasibility study asks - 1) architectural assessment, 2) code assessment (life safety, accessibility), 3) acoustics and lighting, and 4) conditions of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems - identify issues needing to be addressed, solutions and cost; ample time will be allowed for stakeholder engagement; issues identified - 1) ramp for accessibility at front entrance needed, landing to be extended to meet ramp, propose to add vestibule door of glass

(dampen street noise, maintain heating/cooling, allow more natural light), other possible changes (add wainscoting to chapel, up lighting to highlight interior roof structure), 2) speech intelligibility to be improved, all existing surfaces are hard, add acoustic panel or curtains (120 sq ft); BD acknowledges presentation is of feasibility study put forth by Town; VB asks what will happen to existing door if vestibule and new door added; AB responds that existing door will stay, vestibule will be enclosed, could be all glass; AN remarks on need for 3D image of exterior changes to currently very striking street facade to allow stakeholders to visualize; AB responds this will be included in next phase; BF asks for possibility of bi-symmetrical design for ramp system; AB responds that landscaping can accomplish this, ramp needed on only one side; BK notes vandalism concerns for chapel, glass doors could be an issue, we need to proceed gently as this building was gift to Town and has been well-kept for 85 years, Town Counsel should be consulted, problems to be resolved are 1) accessibility at front steps, 2) accessible bathroom, and 3) organ placement; BD notes that buildings need to be used, have a life, ADA is a required aspect of this, honoring the gift and increasing the use is a delicate balance, TT invites members to tour the chapel

- 2) **76 Willow Street subdivision** - BD notes that application has been withdrawn; AN suggests members keep an eye on agendas as it could be resubmitted
- 3) **Acton Center horse trough relocation** - BD reports that as part of intersection/roadway improvements trough will be relocated; BK notes that Acton Center is a National Register Historic District and thus horse trough is within HC jurisdiction as well as HDC; HDC hearing scheduled for 2/22 and HC members are invited to attend

VB reports that Bob Leonard, Acton's historic plaque maker, has passed away from Covid, and that we need a new contractor; FA suggests we look at Concord's plaques; BD suggests using listserv

III. Consent Items - None

Adjournment

VB moved and BK seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of January 2022
- Presentation - Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel feasibility study per Andy Brockway