



ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes July 12, 2023, 7:30 pm Town Hall, Room 126

Present: Bill Dickinson - Chair (BD), Victoria Beyer (VB) Bob Ferrara (BF), Bill Klauer (BK), Fran Arsenault - Select Board Liaison (FA), Barb Rhines - Cultural Resources Planner (BR)

Guests: Architect Joanna Reck (JR), Anne Forbes (AF)

Absent: none

Chair BD called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

I. Regular Business

1. Review of meeting minutes from June 14 - BK moved to approve the minutes of the June meeting and VB seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Citizen concerns – BK noted that the South Acton visioning plans are looking for more housing, per the MBTA housing requirements.

AF asked about 457 Massachusetts Ave, the Whitcomb House. She noted the Jacobys had sold to Common Ground Development. The developer is considering a ~36-unit rental proposal in the back of the property; it will keep the house, which is on MACRIS. BK noted that this must go through a comprehensive planning process. BD agreed and thought that Janet Adachi and the people at Acton Community Housing Corp (ACHC) will review, and the HC might not even see it. AF urged that the HC be watchful and stressed the importance that this one of the best of the small number of Greek Revival homes in Acton.

3. Any ZBA/Planning Board projects on the CRL? – none reported.

4. Bridge project between Rail Trail and TTT at old Davis Road update - AF noted that Larry Sorley should be consulted on appropriate signage for the project.

5. Status of converting CRL to MACRIS - BR noted that Marabella, a high school intern, has started on the project. BR also did a brief demo of some of the issues. The goal is to include all information now on the CRL into MACRIS and also include links to MACRIS properties in the Town's GIS system. After all information is moved, the CRL can be eliminated.

6. Under demo delay: 27 Martin St – BF was asked to contact the owner of 27 Martin Street, Kim Amaral, one more time before the demo delay expires later this year. This case began with a hearing at the May 11, 2022, meeting.

7. Historical Plaque Applications: No new applications were received. BR noted that the sign maker Meg Nichols from Acton has moved and now charges \$100 per application, inclusive of shipping. BR will rewrite the application process currently on the Town website.

8. National Register application for Woodlawn Cemetery: BK feels we should pursue a National Register application for Woodlawn Cemetery, independent of whatever decisions are made with respect to the Concord Road Corridor. There was general agreement. The next step is to advertise for a consultant to develop the application. AF suggests the HC apply for an MHC Planning Grant. BR will look into this possibility.

9. Concord Road Historical Corridor update. The Corridor includes -properties along Concord Rd. from Woodlawn Cemetery up through Ice House Pond. BF spoke to Duncan Ritchie of PAL about the advisability of applying for National Historic District registration versus creating a 4th local Acton Historic District. Duncan focused mostly on the National District application, which he said is quite involved and can be very expensive. He did recommend an expert from Wayland.

BD reviewed comments from the meeting with Historic District Commission on the two options for creating a local Concord Road Corridor Historic District. The HDC did not object to a fourth Historic District in Acton but did not have the bandwidth to pursue it now. The other option is to form a separate study committee. The HC consensus was that the HC should pursue this, and asked BR to investigate the process. This option will involve the Acton Selected Board appointing members of the study committee and ultimately require MHC approval.

10. Acton 250 Committee update – BK reported that the committee had chosen a logo from among 40+ submissions. BF described plans for a series of speakers starting September 21, as well regular articles in local media every month leading up to the 250th.in 2025.

II. New/Special Business

1. Looking for New Members - BD noted that Ken Dow is interested but could not attend this meeting but hopes to attend next month.

2. Review architectural proposal for 76 Maple Street. Joanna Deck (JD), the architect who is developing a renovation for this 1864 house at the corner of Maple and Martin, showed preliminary plans for improvements to the rear entrance and sun porch, which were added in the 1890s.JD is chair of the Andover HDC and understands well the goals of our commissions. All HC members felt the plans were more in character of the original house. BD expressed the desire that proposals like this receive more expedited treatment. The suggestion was that JD could apply for a demo permit soon.

3. Archaeology Bylaw: Preservation of Archaeologically Significant Resources. BF wanted to ensure that BR had received a list of 3 local Cultural Resource Management (CRM) consultants for the Town Planning Department to include on the vendor list to perform the initial archaeological assessments mentioned in the archaeology bylaw. All three agreed to be on call for these quick-turnaround assessments and they are Kimberley Connors (Archaeology Outreach, LLC), David Gutbrod (Commonwealth Heritage Group), Duncan Ritchie (Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.). BD moved to approve and send the list to the Planning Department, VB seconded, and the vote was unanimous. Additional CRM consultants with local knowledge can also be added in the future. BR agreed to check.

III. Consent Items - None

Adjournment

VB moved and BK seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously at 9:25 PM.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

June 14, 2023, minutes