

Northborough Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 8, 2023 called to order 7:02 PM

Members present: Norm Corbin-Chair, Leslie Harrison-Vice Chair, Brian Smith, Millie Milton, Brian Swanson, Bob Licht, Amanda Derosier Millette; Alternates: Tom Reardon; Liaison: Julianne Hirsh

Absent: Alt's: Bruce Chute, Lorna Helms

Norm Corbin read Governor Baker's 2022 Covid 19 emergency public meeting notice.

Prior meeting minutes:

January 25, 2022 meeting minutes: Approved unanimously , Norm will check on spelling of "Brennon" and correct as necessary. (Motion by Leslie, seconded by Brian Smith).

Old Business:

The Historic Preservation Plan or link to it has been distributed to the Historical Society, Community Facebook pages and email lists. In addition an article about it has been published in the Community Advocate news and hard copies are available at Town Hall, Library and Senior Center.

Norm will, but has not yet, contacted several homeowners who expressed interest in preservation of their property. Leslie to draft a follow up letter re: 302 Church Street

Small projects:

- Tom mentioned a Northborough England and will follow up on making contact.
- Amanda will follow up on presenting some local history at Proctor School.
- Brian Swanson has drafted letters of welcome (6) or appreciation (2). With 6 more to be done with some complicated by becoming condominiums etc.
- New Kizer section cemetery signs are in process, to be installed soon.

The January 27 Historical Society Program was done by Norm on Northborough history and Historic Districts.

Committee representative updates:

MPIC – Millie reported that the January meeting seeking community input on what we want to see in town was productive and a future meeting with community and business owners is planned.

CPC – Leslie reports library sign and required White Cliffs bond payment will move forward. The historic allocation requests for the Historical Society window restoration, First Parish Steeple repairs and Historical Reserves will not be funded this round.

Planning – Millie pointed out that the Bartlett Street warehouse proposal might have been impacted if there were more information and guidance regarding Native American / Archaeological potential in the area.

Tom reported the 78 W. Main Street owner wants to preserve historical character of the property as it gets redeveloped.

Julianne reported that Legacy Tree Project info was sent to DPW/tree warden with no response yet.

White Cliffs - Norm says the MetroWest proposal contains plans 1) on improvements/restoration to the historic building and grounds with some provision for ground floor use as a community event venue and 2) proposing about 50 affordable housing apartments. The next step would be for the board of Selectmen sign an “option to purchase” to allow vetting and community forums to move ahead. Any final transfer of the property can only be made by a town meeting (probably in the fall). There is currently a petition by about 200 residents asking the BOS not to sign an “option to purchase” which, if heeded, would immediately stop the project and leave the town with a deteriorating building with no prospects.

Norm has drafted a letter urging the BOS to sign the option to allow the vetting process to move ahead. Members of this commission with one abstention agreed to sign the letter with the following sentence included:

“This letter is neither an endorsement nor a rejection of the MetroWest Collaborative Development proposal by Northborough Historic District Commission members; *its purpose is to have the proposal properly vetted*”.

Motion to Adjourn made by Bob seconded by Brian Smith, approved unanimously at approximately 8:10 PM.

Meeting minutes prepared by Brian Swanson