

Northborough Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

June 27, 2022 called to order 7:04 PM

Members present: Norm Corbin-Chair, Leslie Harrison-Vice Chair, Mike Duchesneau, Brian Smith, Bob Licht, Brian Swanson; Alternates: Amanda Derosier Millette, Tom Reardon

Absent: Millie Milton; Alternates: Lorna Helms, Bruce Chute

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

Public Hearing Re: Demolition of 87 Hudson St.

For this hearing, Tom Reardon will represent the owner. For review, Norm summarized our bylaw as follows: If an owner applies for a demolition permit for a building over 100 years old we must determine if it is historically or architecturally significant in which case we can delay demolition 6 months to allow time to seek alternatives to demolition. Photos of the house and MACRIS data sheet were reviewed and Tom described some of the features as well as the state of disrepair. Leslie made a motion to vote where an affirmative would be that it has historical or architectural significance. B. Swanson seconded. The vote was unanimously, it is not significant. Tom noted that parts or hardware could be donated and Norm will send the owner a list of companies that re-use old timber.

Public Hearing Re: Demolition of the Stirrup Brook Barn at 455 Main St.

Shawn Thompson is representing the town of Northborough sewer department (the owner of the property). This property with about 35 acres was purchased by the town for potential sewage treatment purposes about 20 years ago. Bob Licht showed a series of photos of the barn and its state of disrepair. Shawn noted they wanted to take it down due to safety concerns. Tom indicated it was a large barn of hybrid design and probably about 100 years old. We determined that there is no association of Mary Goodenow with this site. Mike pointed out that this may be one of the few barns left representing the town's significant agrarian history. Andy Bezanson, a family member of former owners, added a few details about the history. He as well as some commission members stated that salvaging items such as the sign on the front as well as re-using some timbers would make loss of this building feel better. Leslie made a motion to vote where an affirmative would be that it has historical or architectural significance. Roll call resulted in a negative by a 4 to 2 count. Norm will send the owner a list of companies that re-use old timber.

Regular Meeting

May 31, 2022 meeting minutes: Approved unanimously as written. (Motion by Leslie, seconded by B. Smith).

Old Business:

Historic Preservation Plan: Norm is still working on incorporating comments from Mass Historical Commission and Northborough Planning. It will not be completed by July 1 but soon.

Norm has purchased two Peter Whitney books for our collection. Suggests historical maps could be purchased from Historical Society.

DPW has been notified that Norm will be the contact for the CPA funded Brigham St Cemetery upgrade and Lorna will be the contact for the Kizer section Cemetery signs.

New Business:

CPA funding requests may be due soon, Leslie will inquiring about specifics. She suggests more historical signs for downtown buildings like the old bank. Norm suggested that starting with town owned buildings would be easier. Tom suggested some funding for incentives for homeowners to make better more historically accurate upgrades such as energy saving projects. We should check with Community Preservation Coalition for ideas.

Applefest is Sept. 18 and we haven't had a booth for several years. Leslie moved that we pay up to \$100 to get a booth this year. Bob seconded and approved unanimously.

Committee Updates:

White Cliffs Committee: They have selected Kirk and Co. to study potential uses. Bob and the Town Planner are working on getting this building on the Preservation Massachusetts "Most Endangered" list.

CPC: Leslie will find out about deadlines for CPA funding submissions

Master Plan Improvement Committee: No Report

Other:

National Register Application for Howard St. Cemetery has been submitted.

Question of why Norm has been getting inquiries on historical restrictions from real estate agents, it is because some insurance companies won't cover historical homes especially if they have any historical restrictions.

Next Meeting Date: Take summer off unless pressing issues arise so Sept 12 if zoom, 14 if in person to be before Applefest.

Motion to Adjourn made by Leslie seconded by B. Swanson approved unanimously at approximately 8:45 PM.

Meeting minutes prepared by Brian Swanson