

**Northborough Historic District Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes for July 15, 2020**

**Present:** Zenya Molnar, Norm Corbin, Brian Smith, Mike Duchesneau, Brian Swanson, Julianne Hirsh, Millie Milton, Leslie Harrison, Chief David Parenti

**Guest:** Alexandra Molnar

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

**Two Public Hearings:**

**1) *New Louvers on the First Parish Church Unitarian – Universalist Steeple,***

Attendee: Timothy Greene, Managing Director, TerraSearch

- AT&T currently has antennas within the Church steeple, the equipment needs upgrading due to technology upgrades. The plan is to replace eight wooden louvers at the top of the steeple with identical, custom made fiberglass louvers (all antenna work is internal).
- Timothy shared a screen image showing drawings of plans and images.
- Questions from the NHDC committee:
  - o Millie: How long will the project take? Response: a couple months total; 5-10 days to do the actual work at the steeple.
  - o Mike: Replacing ones at the top only and not the ones above the clock face? Response: correct.
  - o Norm: CPA funding was used to restore the steeple to prevent leaks a few years ago. His concern is that the new work could cause leaks. Timothy realizes leaks are not acceptable.
  - o Leslie: Why replacing? Response: RF signal transmission is improved with the new louver materials
  - o Mille: Are you adding any antenna? Response: No, six will be replaced.
- Questions/Comments from the Public:
  - o Comment sent to Norm: Mitch Cohen of 12 Whitney Street has no concerns about either project and finds the Church to be a great neighbor (he lives across the street).
  - o Gordon Hart's question: Do you expect any fading of the green color of the fiberglass louvers? Response: No, it would just be regular maintenance no different than painting the wood on the outside.
  - o Ed Harlow's question of 20 School Street: Are the panels salvageable or would they get destroyed in the process of removal? Response: they would be salvageable but are fairly large, but it is certainly something they can discuss in the pre-construction walk.
- Mike moved to take a roll call vote for acceptance of the replacement of the eight AT&T louvers in the Church steeple. Mille seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Norm will send approved Application for Certificate documents to TerraSearch

## **2) Solar Panels, First Parish Church Unitarian – Universalist**

Attendees: Ed Harlow, Jeanne Cahill, and Gordon Hart

- The Church Building Committee submitted an application to add solar panels to the south side roof of the Parish Hall. This is to reduce electric energy costs and have a greener source of energy.
- The plan is 45 black solar panels to be mounted flush with the roof.
- Their Congregation has approved the proposition and funding has been approved.
- Gordon Hart shared plans with images of the Parish Hall and the panels on the roof.
- Questions from the NHDC committee:
  - Mike asked if any other infrastructure is needed to connect the panels to the grid.  
Response: no; inverter system goes in utility closet that requires a minor interior modification. Site visit with installer on Friday, July 17 will explain how design will be implemented.
  - o Norm advised the building committee to let us know if there will be any changes based on the upcoming site visit.
  - o Alexandra asked why the color black was chosen. Response: Jeanne Cahill responded that black is least obtrusive.
  - o Norm asked if other locations for the panels were considered. Response: Gordon responded that another location would be on the south lawn but the Church doesn't need that big of an array. Single phase electricity limits them to having 45 single panels. Jeanne said there is no other place on the property that would have illumination except for the lawn but that wouldn't be suitable for the Historic District, as it would look industrial.
  - o Millie asked about reversible solar panels. Response: Gordon or Jeanne didn't know. Norm explained that it describes the situation if another owner comes in and they want to remove the panels. Jeanne said the life expectancy of panels is 25 years.
- Their neighbor Mr. Mitch Cohen has no concerns.
- Leslie moved that we approve the solar panel project for the UU Church. Norm seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Norm will send approved Application for Certificate documents to UU Church

## **Regular NHDC Meeting**

### **Previous Meeting Minutes:**

Mike made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 15, 2020 with edits. Norm seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Leslie made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 19, 2020 with edits. Norm seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Old Business**

Historic Bronze Markers:

- Cold Harbor Bridge and Gale General Store markers have been installed. Native American marker has been purchased and the post has been installed.

#### Cemetery Interpretive Sign:

- Focus on Brigham Street. Norm requested edits to the text and would specifically like to have it shortened.
  - o Alex and Zenya will review and edit the text and then Leslie will do a second pass to review.
  - o Norm recommended we find a clear image to include on the sign and a list of people who are buried there.

#### Newspaper articles:

- Zenya and Alex wrote an article for the Community Advocate for the newest historic signs.
- Norm wrote an article on 156 Pleasant Street that has been published. He wrote an article for the Northborough Hardware Store and the Route 20 sign, both of which haven't been published yet.

Route 20 Historic Highway Signage: installed.

Letters of Appreciation: Alex wrote letter for 75 Main Street, the current antique store.

CPA Request for Nominating the Howard Street Burial Ground & Cemetery to the National Register — Town Meeting was delayed to Saturday, July 18.

#### **New Business**

##### Committee Officers for 2020-2021

- Leslie asked if anyone is interested in taking on the Chair role.
- Leslie nominated Norm to continue as Chair.
- Leslie moved to elect Norm as Chair of the Commission. Mike seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Norm recommended Leslie as Vice Chair and asked if anyone else would like to be considered for Vice Chair.
- Norm moved to elect Leslie as Vice Chair of the Commission. Zenya seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Norm will approach Bruce for Secretary
- Two positions have opened on the Committee with Zenya and Alex leaving. Millie and Brian who have served as alternates will apply.

#### **Other**

- The Northborough Historical Society (Lois Smith) has started daily post on its Facebook page highlighting Northborough history.
- 137 East Main Street owner called Norm to ask if she should request a demolition delay.
- 35 Whitney Street has been given the OK by the Mass. Hist. Commission for nomination into the National Register of Historic Places. The homeowners are looking for a contractor to prepare the nomination documentation.

**Mail:** none

**Next meeting date:** September 16, 2020.

**Adjournment**

Leslie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13pm. Mike seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zenya Molnar  
Secretary