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By Karen Wilber at 3:26 pm, Jun 06, 2022

Northborough Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes, January 24, 2022

called to order 7:01 PM

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

Absent: Millie Milton

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

Prior meeting minutes:

November 15 minutes: 1 extra comma removed, Brian Smith motion to approve, Leslie Harrison seconded, unanimously approved.

Old Business:

CPA Funding requests: Had first zoom meeting for this round. There were some questions about other funding sources but no specific requests for follow up information.

Historic Preservation Plan: Reviewed drafts of sections 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4. We will add Mia McDonald to acknowledgments, note that bison are not extinct, soften the word "prevent" in section 3.1 as we really have no teeth to prevent, that Chauncy is a lake and that Route 20 is the longest road in the US. Other minor suggestions should be sent to Norm Corbin.

Norm sent previous sections to Jennifer Doherty at the MA Historical Commission for comment. She suggested thinking beyond buildings to cover everything historical. She suggested using other local regulations such as zoning to help with preservation and that actions to be done might be summarized in a short chart.

Tom Reardon reports that the current town sign bylaws do not cover historical markers.

Lorna will find out why the NHDC is starting to get requests from potential new owners regarding the status of historic preservations & restrictions on antique properties up for sale.

Budget: memberships with Preservation Mass., Mass. Historic Alliance and Northborough Historical Society have been paid.

New Business:

Norm Corbin used 87 Hudson Street as an example questioning why the NHDC doesn't always get early notification of projects that require the demolition of an antique property. In some instances, we are notified only after new building designs are finalized, giving us little opportunity to discuss options to demolition with the developer. Tom Reardon noted that the new designs can be reviewed before a demolition request is submitted. We are notified only when a demolition permit is requested.

Tom suggested that focusing on outreach to owners of older properties to help them maintain the value and viability of the property might be the best way to make demolition a less attractive option. Outreach might include mass save or energy efficiency information, CPC or other funding assistance, zoning or variance possibilities for other usage etc.

Norm Corbin reports that 6 antique homes have recently changed hands and will share that information so we might send letters of introduction and welcome.

New Members: Tom Reardon has been sworn in and Lorna Helms is yet to be sworn in as alternates.

Next meeting: scheduled for February 28 by zoom.

Adjournment: motion made by Leslie Harrison seconded by Brian Smith and approved unanimously at approximately 7:57 pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by Brian Swanson