

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Susanne Walker Abetti, Roy Black, Robin Adair Logan, Pat Stark and chair Jonathan Schechtman.

Staff Present: Town Manager Leo Pullar and Matt Osborn, Town Planner.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown and Architectural Historian Brian Knight.

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held in Meeting Room 2, Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Wednesday, July 20, 2016. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

1. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. There were none.
2. Minutes of the June 15, 2016 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of June 15th. Pat Stark noted a correction. Roy Black made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 15th with the noted correction. The motion was seconded by Susanne Walker Abetti and approved.
3. Advent Camp Meeting Grounds Historic District Nomination: Matt Osborn introduced Architectural Historian Brian Knight. He noted that the HHPC is very pleased with the research that Brian has done on the Advent Historic District Nomination. Brian reported that he has obtained photographs from the Hartford Historical Society. He noted that traditional research on this project has been difficult since camps did not get much coverage from local newspapers and there is no central archive. He reported that he will be speaking with long-time camp caretaker Joe Trottier. Brian stated that he is backing up archival research with field work. He stated that he learned that the Adventists and Seventh Day Adventists held different camps in White River Junction. The Seventh Day Adventists held camps near Sykes Mountain Avenue. Brian reported that he sent a letter to Advent camp owners requesting information and received little response. He is planning to visit the camp during the upcoming camp week in early August and hopes to obtain information from camp owners.

Brian stated that regarding eligibility for a National Register District, the Advent Camp Meeting Grounds have a strong case for Criterion A “that are associated with events that have a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are other intact camps in Vermont. Brian responded yes noting one in Bethel and several others in the state that may or may not be intact. He noted that there are no religious camps in Vermont that have been listed on the National Register. Brian thinks that the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation would be eager to include one. Jonathan thanked Brian for attending the meeting. He added that the community meeting with the Advent Camp takes place this evening at 6:30 p.m.

4. Introduction of New Town Manager: Jonathan Schechtman welcomed new Town Manager Leo Pullar to the meeting. Introductions were made. Leo noted that he is attending Commission meetings and will be setting up meetings with Commission chairs.

5. Demolition Ordinance: Jonathan Schechtman informed Leo Pullar that the HHPC is considering a demolition ordinance in the wake of a number of historic buildings that have been demolished in the last few years. He hopes the ordinance will be fair, equitable and serve as a stop-gap measure to allow time for photo documentation or consideration of restoration. He noted that the HHPC has been reviewing ordinances from other Vermont communities. Jonathan stated that the HHPC is also concerned about demolition by neglect. He stated that Hartford's unique architecture plays an important role in bringing people to town. Robin Adair Logan agreed stating that historic buildings create a warm feeling. Susanne Walker Abetti emphasized the importance of preservation education. Jonathan stated that it is time to start the process to develop the ordinance and wants to make sure it is legally sound. Jonathan noted that the Town has lost many buildings to floods in Quechee, West Hartford and Hartford Village. Robin Adair Logan added that fire has taken many buildings as well particularly in White River Junction. She stated that she thinks Hartford lacks an appreciation of its historic buildings compared to other Vermont communities. Susanne Walker Abetti requested that Matt Osborn send Leo Pullar the recent Preservation Trust of Vermont Newsletter. Matt Osborn noted that a workshop will be scheduled with the Planning Commission once a draft ordinance has been completed.
6. Sykes Avenue Drive-In Sign: Matt Osborn reported that Department of Public Works Director Rich Menge informed him that there are folks in the community that would like to see the former drive-in sign retained after the roundabout project. The sign has been used to advertise community events for many years. Matt noted that the property that the sign sits on is needed for the roundabout project. Rich wanted to know if the sign has historic value. Matt was interested in the opinion of the Commission. Pat Stark noted that the drive-in started around 1950 following closure of the White River Junction Airport in the late 1940s. The drive-in operated until 1976. She was unsure of the actual date of the drive-in sign. Dennis Brown reported that the Selectboard discussed the possibility of relocating the sign. The HHPC agreed that the sign was worthy of preserving.
7. West Hartford Library: Leo Pullar reported that the roof leak was repaired and that the Town is investigating the access issue to the attic space. Robin Adair Logan provided background information and the need for access and ventilation to attic space.
8. Jericho Schoolhouse: Matt Osborn reported that work on the Jericho Schoolhouse Foundation has started. He referred to an article that appeared recently in the Valley News.
9. Town Cemeteries: Leo Pullar reported that he met with Arthur Peale to discuss the cemetery situation and is learning about the cemeteries that the Town has responsibility to maintain. Leo indicated that the Town is currently looking at trees that pose a risk to Town cemeteries.
10. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 17th at 4:30 p.m. Pat Stark announced that there will be a tour of the Theron Boyd House on Saturday July 23rd.
11. Adjournment: Pat Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Susanne Walker Abetti and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. Jonathan thanked Leo Pullar for attending the meeting.