

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Draft Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown.

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held in Meeting Room 2, Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Wednesday, September 21, 2016. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 4:04 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 August 17, 2016 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of August 17th. Being none, Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of August 17th as written. The motion was seconded by Roy Black and approved.
3. Hartford CLG Program Performance Evaluation: Matt Osborn reported that every four years, each Certified Local Government program has a performance evaluation with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Matt noted that he met with State Architectural Historian Devin Colman on August 30th. At the meeting, Devin went through a series of standard questions about Hartford's CLG. Matt presented the performance evaluation letter from the State dated September 20th stating that "the Hartford CLG program is doing a great job..." Jonathan Schechtman noted that he liked Devin Colman's idea about partnering with other organizations. He suggested inviting Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Director PJ Skehan to a future meeting. The HHPC agreed. Robin Adair Logan expressed concern that the HHPC has not been very effective preventing historic buildings from being demolished. There was discussion about the need for a demolition ordinance. Given the limited time before today's scheduled consultant interviews, the HHPC agreed to continue discussion at next month's meeting.
4. Advent Camp Meeting Grounds Historic District Nomination: Matt Osborn reported that the Advent Camp Meeting Grounds Historic District Nomination was completed in late August and submitted to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP). Matt prepared a closeout report which was accepted by VDHP. The project cost total was reduced by the fee proposal by Brian Knight (\$1,500 lower). The shortfall was made up by staff time and HHPC volunteer time on the Advent nomination and attendance at the annual historic preservation conference.
5. White River Junction Historic District Nomination Update: Matt Osborn noted that interviews with Architectural Historians Paula Sagerman and Brian Knight are scheduled today at 4:45 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Matt presented the HHPC with a list of questions for the consultants as well as an evaluation form to rate each consultant. He noted that the Town and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation require documentation of the procurement process to hire consultants.
6. HHPC Budget: Matt Osborn noted that the HHPC approved a draft budget at last month's meeting. He stated that Department Director Lori Hirshfield requested that the HHPC select an

area in the budget to cut if each department is required to make across the board cuts. The Commission agreed that travel and training and advertising line items were too small to begin with and should not be cut. There was discussion whether to reduce the CLG grant match funds or the historic district signs. The Commission agreed to eliminate one or two of the historic district signs if absolutely necessary rather than cutting funds for the CLG grant match. Regarding replacement of the Wilder Historic District sign, Susanne Walker Abetti requested that staff inquire if the town's insurance policy would cover it.

7. HHPC Annual Report: Matt Osborn presented the HHPC with a draft annual report. He asked the Commission to review it and get any comments to him by the end of next week.
8. 2017 CLG Grant Project: Matt Osborn reported that the annual CLG grant application is due in mid-December. The HHPC will need to select a project next month and go before the Selectboard for approval in November. Susanne Walker Abetti suggested a brochure on Hartford history. The HHPC agreed that this is a good idea. Matt stated that the Commission also has discussed bringing in speakers to historic preservation. Robin Adair Logan questioned how effective that would be. The HHPC agreed to continue discussion at next month's meeting and make a decision.
9. Nott's West Hartford Barn: Matt Osborn reported that last month, he left a message with Nott's Excavation the HHPC's interest in conducting a site visit to the barn and pry off some inside boards to view what is underneath. Matt stated that since the last HHPC meeting, the Nott's received a determination from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation that the barn did not retain its historic integrity since the farmhouse and other agricultural buildings no longer remain. Matt stated that he conducted a site visit and found that the building had already been removed and site excavation underway to construct a new building on the site.
10. Train Wreck Historic Marker: Matt Osborn reported that at the request of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the Hartford Department of Public Works removed the damaged sign. On his August 30th trip to Hartford State Architectural Historian picked up the sign. The sign will be returned to the manufacturer and repaired. Once it is repaired and returned to the state, it will be re-installed.
11. White River Junction Railroad Station Canopy: Matt Osborn reported that the State of Vermont was considering removal of the south canopy at the White River Junction Train Station since it is in poor condition. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation determined that it no longer had historic integrity. However, Hartford resident and railroad historian Chuck Bohi was able to convince the state to retain and repair the canopy. No timeframe for the repair has been given.
12. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19th at 4:30 p.m.
13. Adjournment: Roy Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Robin Adair Logan and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.