

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 12, 2017
Draft Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director P.J. Skehan and 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, April 12, 2017. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

1. Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce: Jonathan Schechtman introduced Chamber Executive Director P.J. Skehan. He stated that he invited P.J. Skehan to the meeting to discuss the public outreach/education project on the importance of historic preservation. Jonathan suggested collaborating with the Chamber to involve the business community in the project. He noted that our historic buildings are very important to our sense of place and what makes our community special. Jonathan stated that he would like to see more restoration of older buildings instead of demolition. P.J. stated that the Chamber is very good at getting the word out to members. They have a successful business after hours monthly event. They have presentations, but they try to keep them very brief. The Chamber also has a strong Facebook presence. He noted that the Army Corps of Engineers, owners of the Quechee Gorge Visitors Center would like to see more historical information at the Visitors Center.

Susanne Walker Abetti stated that the HHPC has discussed doing a brochure on the history of Hartford and the five villages. P.J. responded that brochures are still effective today and the Chamber goes through thousands of them. He advised that when doing a brochure, don't try to do too much. He also suggested posting brochures on your website and using social media. P.J. stated that he would like to see a brochure of the five villages with a photo of a well-known landmark for each village.

P.J. noted that the Chamber struggles with confusion with Hartford, Connecticut and the issue of identity and Hartford's five villages. He noted that the Hartford street map needs to be updated. He noted that maps are expensive and we need to figure out how to update and print the map.

Dennis Brown mentioned the need to replace the Hartford 250th banners. Pat Stark suggested a grant to design a new banner. Dennis thinks the design could be simple. Dennis asked P.J. if the Chamber has an interest in the project. P.J. stated that there are a lot of small businesses in Hartford and they typically have tight budgets. He stated that he will discuss the topic with the Chamber Board.

Jonathan Schechtman thanked P.J. for attending the HHPC Meeting. P.J. stated that he likes collaborating and that we can learn from others.

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. There were none.
3. Minutes of the March 15, 2017 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of March 15th. There were no corrections. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 15th as written. The motion was seconded by Roy Black and approved.
4. Annual Downtown/Historic Preservation Conference: Matt Osborn noted that the annual Vermont Downtown/Historic Preservation Conference will be held in Downtown White River Junction on June 8th. Dennis Brown requested more details about the conference so he can report back to the Selectboard. Matt agreed. Matt noted that as the host community, there is a lot of work to be done in putting on the conference. We will need volunteers and he hopes the HHPC will get involved. He stated that Committees will be formed and meetings held in the coming weeks. Pat Stark stated that it would be helpful to have information on what is

needed and when. Matt will e-mail information to the HHPC. Matt asked for suggestions for elements to be included in the historic preservation walking tour. The HHPC came up with the following list:

- * Town Hall
- * Train Station
- * Catholic Church
- * Bank Building
- * Town Hall
- * Center for Cartoon Studies (former Colodny Building)
- * Main Street Museum
- * Post Office (Center for Cartoon Studies)
- * Methodist Church
- * Hotel Coolidge

5. Update of the White River Junction Historic District: Matt Osborn reported that State Architectural Historian Devin Colman came to White River Junction to meet with Architectural Historian Brian Knight on April 5th to look at possible expansion of the District. Matt noted that Roy Black and he attended the walk. Matt reported that Devin indicated that although the architecture may not be exemplary, the connection to the history of the village and the stories that go along with it will make the case for expansion. Matt stated that Brian Knight is presently conducting the research to make that connection. Jonathan Schechtman noted that Brian has very strong research skills.

Matt noted that the first community meeting for the White River Junction Historic District is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26th at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. He reported that Brian will focus on the changes downtown with a theme of “Past and Present”. Jonathan Schechtman suggested putting together a display for the meeting to draw the public’s attention. The HHPC agreed. Jonathan suggested using the display for the Downtown/Historic Preservation Conference in June.

Matt Osborn reported that he will be making contact with folks for the oral history component of the project.

6. 2017 CLG Grant; Public Outreach and Education: Matt Osborn noted that the HHPC needs to start thinking about the project. Jonathan Schechtman suggested that the Request for Proposals (RFP) be written in a way that allows flexibility. The Commission agreed. Matt stated that he hopes to have a draft RFP completed in June.
7. Village Center Application for Hartford Village: Matt Osborn reported that the application for Village Center designation was approved by the Downtown Board at their March 27th meeting. Matt reported that Roy Black and Mary Nadeau joined him at the meeting. Dennis Brown asked if there will be a sign in the village installed indicating the designation. Matt responded that is not typically done. Susanne Walker Abetti noted that the villages all have historic district signs. Matt stated that he plans to send a mailing to all of the property owners in the new Village Center indicating the designation and providing information on designation benefits.
8. Advent Camp Meeting Grounds Historic District Nomination: Jonathan Schechtman reported that the Advent Historic District Nomination was approved by the Selectboard at their March 28th meeting. Brian Knight presented at the meeting. The Selectboard was very supportive of the Nomination, which is scheduled to go before the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on April 19th. If approved, it will be sent to the National Park Service for their consideration. Matt reported that the Camp was broken into earlier this week. Several of the camps were damaged and items stolen.
9. Hartford Community Coalition Block Party: Matt Osborn reported that the Hartford Community Coalition is planning their 3rd annual Block Party at Lyman Point Park on Wednesday, June 7th. Matt noted that the event attracts over 500 people. He noted that the HHPC could have an information table at the event.
10. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17th.
11. Adjournment: Roy Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.