

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 29, 2020
Draft Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: West Hartford resident Arthur Peale and Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown.

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Wednesday, January 29, 2020. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. Matt Osborn reported that he heard from Susanne Walker Abetti and Robin Adair Logan that they are unable to attend the meeting.

1. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. Dennis Brown requested that the Underground Railroad and Drive-in Sign be added to the agenda. Arthur Peale requested adding the Stetson House. The HHPC agreed.
2. Minutes of the December 18th HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of December 18th. There were none. Roy Black made a motion to approve the Minutes of December 18th as written. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved.
3. Taft's Flat Intensive Level Survey: Architectural Historian Brian Knight was present to provide an update on the project and discuss next steps. Brian reported that he has walked the neighborhoods 3-4 times, photographed each property, prepared the HSSS forms and gone through old Lister's cards and obtained many photos of the houses from the 1960s showing many of the original homes. He also has conducted deed research for each property, developed a history of Taft's Flat and prepared a rough draft narrative of each neighborhood. Regarding the topic of integrity, Brian noted that changes have been made to many of the homes and that we need to look at it as a collective as a district and that most houses would not be eligible for individual listing. He stated that the most obvious historic district is Demers Avenue followed by a small district on Victory Circle and Worcester Avenue would be viable. He noted that there were many interruptions to the Highland Park development and it reflects several different time periods from the early to mid-20th century. Matt Osborn noted that we had planned on a walking tour and community meeting in the spring. Jonathan Schechtman thanked Brian Knight for attending the meeting.
4. 2020 CLG Grant Application: Matt Osborn reported that he received notification that we received the CLG grant for the demolition ordinance. Although the full amount for hiring a consultant was awarded, funds for the annual historic preservation conference and the membership for the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions were not funded since there were requests for more grant funds than were available. Matt stated that he was relieved that we had the full amount for the consultant. Matt noted that the grant agreement will be issued in the coming weeks and he expects to issue a Request for Proposals later in the spring to hire a consultant.
5. Underground Railroad: Dennis Brown asked consultant Brian Knight if he was aware of any information indicating that the Underground Railroad existed in Hartford. Brian responded that he has not come across anything, but noted that information on the Underground Railroad was typically not publicized.

6. WWI Honor Roll Monument: Pat Stark reported that the Monument Committee will be meeting tomorrow evening. Jonathan Schechtman suggested inviting Mary Kay Brown to a future HHPC meeting. The HHPC agreed.
7. Sykes Avenue Drive-In Sign: Dennis Brown noted that with the Roundabout Project, the drive-in sign will be removed from its present location. Dennis would like to see the sign relocated and continue to be used. Matt Osborn responded that from a historic preservation perspective, the sign does not have value when it is removed from its original use. The Commission sees community value in continuing use of the sign. Roy Black volunteered to contact sign owner Jim Flanagan to inquire about the future of the sign.
8. Stetson House in West Hartford: West Hartford resident Arthur Peale was in attendance to talk about the Stetson House located on Stetson Road in West Hartford. Built circa 1841, Arthur stated that the house is quite unique since it has not experienced many changes since the 19th century. The house and the barns are listed as contributing properties in the West Hartford Village Historic District, listed on the National Register in 2004. Some of the barns have collapsed. Arthur presented photos of the interior and exterior of the house and barns. He noted that the house has not been lived in in 10-20 years. Arthur expressed concern that the house could be demolished. He believes that the house could be restored. Jonathan Schechtman thanked Arthur Peale for bringing the item before the Commission.
9. Town Meeting Coffee with Committees: Jonathan Schechtman commented that there were very few people who visited the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission table at last year's Coffee with Committees event at Town Meeting. He wasn't sure it is worth the effort to participate this year. The HHPC agreed that they will not participate in the event.
10. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th.
11. Adjournment: Pat Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Roy Black and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.