

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
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: Planning Commission member Dennis Brown.

A remote meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Wednesday, July 15, 2020. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He proceeded to read the “Remote Public Meeting Script for Opening a Meeting” as recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.”

1. Minutes of the June 17, 2020 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of June 17th. There were none. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 17th as written. The motion was seconded by Robin Adair Logan and approved.
2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. There were none.
3. Taft’s Flat Intensive Level Survey: Matt Osborn reported that he mailed a letter to Taft’s Flat property owners (approximately 90 households) and provided a link to the Draft Report. He noted that consultant Brian Knight requested that we add a note in the letter asking for information on the history of the house. He noted that a few people replied and they were enthusiastic about the project. Matt also reported that he contacted Devin Colman of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation this week and a decision on the grant deadline extension request to the National Park Service had still not been made, but it was expected to be granted due to COVID-19. Jonathan Schechtman asked HHPC members if they have had a chance to review the revised draft. Susanne Walker Abetti replied that she is working on it and has some edits. Matt requested submitting comments on the revised draft to him by July 31st. Members can either e-mail or call Matt with comments and keep track of your time spent reviewing the report.
4. Horace Pease House: Susanne Walker Abetti reported that Lanni & Kathy Janisse purchased the former Horace Peace House and Elks Lodge. The former Elks Lodge consists of an addition off the rear of the house. Susanne noted that plans for the building include a child-care facility. She noted that the Janisse’s have restored other historic buildings in Hartford and plan to restore the Pease House as well. She added that they attended a Preservation Trust of Vermont retreat on restorations last year and are familiar with preservation rules and the process. Susanne noted that there are many moving parts to the process of restoration and that it will take time to complete. She noted that the Janisse’s are seeking a planning grant for restoration. Robin Adair Logan reported that she did a site visit and believes the Janisse’s are following preservation rules. Jonathan Schechtman stated that he is very pleased about preservation of the building. Susanne noted that following restoration of the House, Kathy Janisse would like to see the front of the house used for town receptions. Dennis Brown suggested that the HHPC promote projects that benefit from historic preservation programs.
5. Parker House Renovation: Matt Osborn reported that Simon Pearce Chief Executive Officer Jay Benson requested a letter of support from the HHPC for their grant application to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Matt contacted Caitlin Corkins who noted that they don’t accept letters of support. Instead, she suggested that Jay include in the application that they have the support of the HHPC. Matt conveyed that to Jay. Matt reported that Jay provided the following update about the project on July 9th. On the outside:
 - We have rebuilt the damaged areas of the stone retaining walls and upgraded the steps between the Mill and the Parker House.
 - As of tomorrow, the granite and chain fence will be complete around the top of the retaining wall.
 - The 8-10’ garden beds atop the retaining walls will be planted next week.
 - The porch skirting is showing progress. We’ll continue this treatment along all porches.

- We are in the midst of the window replacement project. Most of the 1st story windows have been replaced - still working on the proper trim details.
- We started masonry work this week to repair /replace the cement skim coat around the base of the building. We will then work to repair/replace missing grout between bricks.
- Painting is just starting.
- We are awaiting quotations from slate roofers to repair the slate in damaged areas.
- Lastly, we are working with an engineer and the town to permit the repair of the porch supports and to fix up the underside of the porch. We are looking at potential designs to landscape the slope on the far side of the Parker House from the Mill.

On the inside of the Parker House, the primary work has been to clean and repair the kitchen and refrigeration in order to support the reopening of the restaurant. We have not begun to consider usage of the upper floors.

Jonathan Schechtman commented that the improvements are coming along nicely. Robin Adair Logan asked about the window replacement. Matt Osborn responded that the windows are Pella Reserve Architectural Series. Robin Adair stated that they are high quality windows. She hopes that the new windows replicate the original windows. She suggested looking at historic photos. Pat Stark agreed to investigate historic photos of the Parker House at the Hartford Historical Society.

6. 2020 CLG Grant (Demolition Ordinance): Matt Osborn reported that he plans to begin work on the Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant for the project in the coming weeks. Matt stated that he will provide the HHPC with a draft of the RFP before releasing it. Robin Adair Logan asked about the scope of work for the project. Matt responded that the consultant will research other demolition ordinances from inside and outside Vermont, work with the HHPC to develop a draft ordinance, facilitate public input for community buy-in and eventually submit to the Selectboard for them to consider adoption. Jonathan Schechtman suggested obtaining information on how the process is working in other communities. The HHPC agreed. Susanne Walker Abetti stated that it is important to have an independent, outside entity facilitate the discussion. The HHPC agreed.
7. Announcements:
 - a. Cemeteries: Pat Stark asked if any members had heard anything about the cemeteries recently. There were no responses. Matt Osborn stated that he will inquire with Scott Hausler, staff liaison to the Cemetery Committee.
 - b. Preservation Trust of Vermont Workshop: Matt Osborn responded that the Preservation Trust of Vermont will be holding an online workshop on Sustainable Preservation on Thursday, July 30th from 9:00 – Noon. He noted that it is limited to 25 registrants.
 - c. Building Energy Code: Dennis Brown asked about the work planning staff is doing on building energy code. Matt Osborn responded that he isn't directly involved, but is aware that Hartford Energy Coordinator Geoff Martin is working with Planning Director Lori Hirshfield and Zoning Administrator Jo-Ann Ells on developing energy standards. He stated that it will affect new construction, but wasn't sure if it related to additions. Matt will inquire.
 - d. Kelton Complex Fire: Dennis Brown reported that he was sad to hear that the auto auction building on Route 14 was destroyed by fire yesterday. The facility dates back to the 1950s.
8. Next HHPC Meeting: Matt Osborn reported that he will be on vacation in mid-August and will not be able to attend the August 19th meeting. The HHPC agreed to cancel the meeting. Matt noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16th.
9. Adjournment: Jonathan Schechtman thanked Dennis Brown for attending the meeting. Robin Adair Logan said it would be great to have Dennis serve on the HHPC. Dennis replied that he would be interested in serving. Matt Osborn noted that the HHPC Bylaws state that there the HHPC has five members. He suggested discussing the Bylaws at the next meeting. The Commission agreed. Robin Adair motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.