

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Approved Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown.

A remote meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:05 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. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. There were none.
2. Minutes of the February 19th HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted a correction. He asked if there are any other corrections to the Minutes of February 19th. Susanne Walker Abetti noted a correction. Robin Adair Logan made a motion to approve the Minutes of February 19th with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved.
3. Taft’s Flat Intensive Level Survey: Matt Osborn noted that Architectural Historian Brian Knight was unable to participate in today’s meeting. Matt stated that Brian has submitted a revised draft of the Taft’s Flat Report. Matt noted that the HHPC had planned on scheduling the community meeting in April and the walking tour in May. With the COVID-19 emergency, the events will be delayed. Matt discussed the possibility of a grant extension with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the response was favorable.

Matt Osborn asked if the HHPC had comments about the report. Robin Adair Logan stated that the report was thorough and comprehensive. She suggested including a footnote with the National Register Criteria. Jonathan Schechtman agreed, but suggested including it in the preamble to be more visible. Robin Adair and the HHPC agreed. Pat Stark stated that the report was fascinating and she was impressed with Brian’s research. Matt suggested inviting Brian to participate in a video meeting with the HHPC in the coming weeks to discuss the report. The HHPC agreed.

4. 2020 CLG Grant (Demolition Ordinance): Matt Osborn reported that the CLG grant was awarded to the Town by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. He noted that the CLG grant was approved by the Selectboard contingent on approval of the Town budget vote and it was determined that there was an error on the March 3rd ballot. As a result, a revote is required. According to Dennis Brown, a date for the revote has not been scheduled. Therefore, the grant agreement can’t be signed at this time. Matt noted that the Town can’t begin work on the project until the grant agreement is signed. He will keep the HHPC posted. Matt noted that due to the COVID-19 emergency, there is currently a Town spending freeze. He hopes it won’t affect this project.
5. Parker House Renovations: Matt Osborn reported that Simon Pearce purchased the adjacent Parker House property in Quechee. Simon Pearce plans to renovate the building and requested to meet on site with the HHPC. The site visit with the HHPC, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and Simon Pearce representatives scheduled for March 18th was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The site visit will be rescheduled. Robin Adair Logan asked about the plans for the Simon Pearce properties across the street that the HHPC visited last year. Matt responded that he did not know, but he will inquire.

6. WWI Honor Roll Monument: Dennis Brown reported that the project has been put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Historic Preservation/Downtown Annual Conference: Matt Osborn reported that the Annual Historic Preservation Conference in Strafford that was scheduled for June 4th in Strafford was cancelled due to COVID-19. It has been rescheduled for next June in Strafford. The HHPC was pleased to hear that the Strafford event will be rescheduled.
8. Sykes Avenue Drive-In Sign: Dennis Brown reported that he presented the HHPC recommendation to not demolish the Drive-in sign but rather to relocate it, to the Selectboard on February 25th. However, the Selectboard voted 5-2 to demolish the sign. Matt Osborn noted that an engineer determined that the sign structure was in very poor shape. Pat Stark requested photos of the sign for the Hartford Historical Society records with a message on it.
9. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20th. Matt Osborn asked if the HHPC would prefer a video meeting. The HHPC was undecided. Dennis Brown urged the HHPC to have a video meeting noting that he has participated in several and he believes the video meetings are much better than a conference call. The HHPC agreed to hold a video meeting on May 20th. Matt responded that he will make arrangements for a Microsoft Teams meeting.
10. Adjournment: Robin Adair Logan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.