

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Susanne Walker Abetti, 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, September 16, 2020. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m. He proceeded to read the “Remote Public Meeting Script for Opening a Meeting” related to Act 92 as recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.”

1. Minutes of the July 15, 2020 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of July 15th. There were none. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 15th 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. CLG Four-year Review Interview: Matt Osborn reported that on September 8th, he participated in an interview with State Architectural Historian Devin Colman regarding the 4-year review of the Hartford CLG Program. The interview went well and consisted of approximately 30 questions ranging from general questions about the CLG program, historic preservation commission’s work, following rules and procedure, grants, status of survey and inventory of historic structures and National Register work. Matt noted that one thing that came out of the meeting was the need for the Commission to maintain a record of actions taken advising the Selectboard, Planning Commission or other groups and individuals on matters affecting National Register or surveyed properties or historic preservation in general. The Commission agreed that it would be beneficial to do this.
4. Taft’s Flat Intensive Level Survey: Matt Osborn reported that the National Park Service extended the time to complete the CLG grant project to next summer due to Covid-19. Matt noted that an amendment to the grant agreement has been signed by the Town and sent back to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The extension will provide an opportunity to hold a walking tour and an in-person community meeting next spring/early summer. The HHPC and staff consider these items integral to the project.

Matt noted that with the extension, it provides the HHPC more time to review the revised draft report. Matt requested submitting comments on the revised draft to him by September 30th. Members can either e-mail or call Matt with comments and keep track of your time spent reviewing the report. Matt also reported that four residents of Taft’s Flat responded to Brian Knight’s request for information on the history of their house. Matt noted that one resident found the building plans to the house in their attic. Matt stated that other benefits to the extension is additional time for architectural Historian Brian Knight to conduct research and fine-tune the report.

5. Parker House Renovation: Matt Osborn reported that Simon Pearce Chief Executive Officer Jay Benson provided the following update about the project yesterday.

- “We have completed the initial core shell improvements of windows, painting and roof repair. The building is back to being weathertight with reduced drafts. We have a little more work on the porch skirting.
- We are currently building a bluestone terrace on the lawn (should be completed next week.
- We received zoning and building permits to reinforce and enclose the existing deck and to re landscape the slope on the parking lot side of the building. Work started this week.
- We are working on plans to add a ramp and an accessible bath to provide ADA access on the first floor.”

Lastly, Jay noted that they “are working to paint and repair the original general store and the antique store (non-historic) on the other side of the street” that is also owner by Simon Pearce.

Jonathan Schechtman commented that the improvements are a very pleasant transformation of the building and grounds. He suggested that HHPC members visit the site. Robin Adair Logan stated that it is beautiful, a very lovely job.

6. Demolition Standards RFP: Matt Osborn reported that he completed a draft of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant for the project in the coming weeks. Matt noted that he has prepared many RFP’s over the years and this one is a pretty standard RFP. He stated that he tried to clearly articulate what the HHPC is looking for in the project. He said the project scope of work is heavy on process, involving workshops including the HHPC, Planning Commission, staff and the consultant as well as community meetings and a meeting with the Selectboard. He said he is looking for feedback from the HHPC regarding the key areas about the description of the project and the scope of work. Matt noted that the consultant will research other demolition standards/ordinances from inside and outside Vermont, work with the HHPC, Planning Commission and staff to develop demolition standards for historic buildings. Jonathan Schechtman responded that he thought the consultant would prepare a demolition ordinance. Matt responded that the process will determine whether a separate ordinance is developed or whether the standards are incorporated as part of the Zoning Regulations. The idea is to develop draft standards that work for Hartford following consultant research and extensive discussion with the HHPC, Planning Commission, staff, the public and Selectboard.

Robin Adair Logan stated that she would like a few more days to review the RFP and review materials from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions from the recent remote national conference that she attended. She noted that there were sessions that addressed demolition of historic buildings. The HHPC agreed to get comments to Matt by Monday, September 21st. Matt noted that we need to be sure that HHPC business needs to be conducted in publicly warned meetings and not via e-mail exchanges in order to adhere to open meeting law requirements. Once Matt receives comments from the HHPC, he will determine whether a special meeting is necessary. Robin Adair suggested that as members go through the RFP review, think of an historic building in Hartford that is in danger of being demolished.

7. Announcements: There were no announcements.
8. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman reported that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21st. The Commission requested that discussion of the HHPC Bylaws be added to the agenda. Matt agreed to add the item to the agenda.
9. Adjournment: Pat Stark motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Robin Adair Logan and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.