

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Draft Meeting Minutes

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

Selectboard Liaison: Dennis Brown.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Cathy Melocik

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 in Room 312 of the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction, Vermont. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The meeting was also accessible remotely via Microsoft Teams with two members attending remotely. Jonathan read the hybrid meeting script followed by a roll call. He welcomed guest Cathy Melocik to the meeting. Jonathan noted that he must leave the meeting at 6:00 p.m. for another engagement.

1. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked Cathy Melocik what she was interested in discussing with the Historic Preservation Commission this evening. Cathy responded that she wanted to discuss the demolition application of a historic building that is before the Planning Commission. Jonathan stated that we will include this under public comments at the beginning of the meeting.
2. Public Comments: Wilder resident Cathy Melocik was present to express her concern about the proposed demolition of two historic buildings on Gates Street and find out whether the HHPC has advised the Planning Commission on this project. She noted that according to the HHPC charge, it states to “advise and assist individuals, Boards, and Commissions on matters relating to the preservation of historic resources.” Jonathan Schechtman responded that the application went to the Design Review Committee and that information from the White River Junction Historic District was provided. The application is now being reviewed by the Planning Commission. He noted that the HHPC hasn’t advised the Planning Commission on the application. Robin Adair Logan noted that since she sits on the Planning Commission and 160 Gates Street is an active application, she is not allowed to comment on the application. She noted that in her ten plus years on the Planning Commission, she is not aware of the HHPC advising the Planning Commission on an application. Cathy encouraged the HHPC to advise the Planning Commission on 160 Gates Street. Dennis Brown agreed, noting that the HHPC has provided good advice in the past. There was discussion. Matt Osborn noted that there is a full agenda and that we need to move on to other agenda items. The HHPC agreed.
3. Minutes of the October 20, 2021 HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any revisions to the minutes of October 20th. Being none, Jonathan stated that the minutes are accepted as written.
4. HHPC Budget: Matt Osborn reported that Planning Department Director Lori Hirshfield presented the Department budget to the Selectboard on October 12th. The Planning Department budget includes the historic preservation budget. Matt noted that the Selectboard didn’t make any changes to the historic preservation budget. In the coming weeks, the Selectboard will finalize the proposed town budget which will then go before town voters on Tuesday, March 1st.
5. Taft’s Flat Intensive Level Survey: Matt Osborn reported that a tentative date of Wednesday, December 8th has been scheduled for the community meeting on the Taft’s Flat project. Matt will

confirm the date with consultant Brian Knight. Once the date is confirmed, Matt will inform the HHPC and begin work on promoting the meeting.

6. White River Junction Railroad Station Improvements: Matt Osborn reported that he received an e-mail from the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission about VTrans submitting a grant application to the Federal Rail Administration for improvements to several Vermont rail stations, including the White River Junction Rail Station. He read from the e-mail the list of possible improvements, “Building- large multi-use building; redesign of entrance to and including passenger areas. Large area formerly used by the Town of Hartford as a Welcome Center may potentially be explored to be part of new station areas; flooring, paint, bathroom upgrades; platform and parking ADA issues. Brick facade and outdoor structure work would improve aesthetics; potential leak issue in cupola. Technological - Wi-Fi, Smart TV, potentially electric vehicle charging stations; potential HVAC work.” Matt suggested writing a letter of support for the grant application. Jonathan Schechtman asked if the Secretary of Interior standards will be met for the work and if the HHPC will be given an opportunity to review the proposed plans. Matt responded that he will inquire.
7. Demolition Delay Standards: Matt Osborn reported that staff is looking at possible amendments to the Zoning Regulations and that it makes sense to include the demolition delay standards as part of the larger package. The next step is to develop a schedule for the amendments. He expects that to be done by the end of the year.
8. 2022 CLG Grant Application: Matt Osborn reported that he has spoken with historic preservation consultant Brian Knight and Planning Director about the proposed history of Hartford performing arts project. He noted that Pat Stark developed a list of venues and events to be included in the project. Matt pared the list down and handed it out the Commission. He noted that it is very important that we discuss the project prior to submitting the CLG grant application which is due on December 6th. Matt noted that the item is scheduled to go before the Selectboard on November 30th. Since we don’t have enough time to discuss the project this evening, Matt suggested scheduling a special meeting next week. It was agreed to schedule a special HHPC meeting on Wednesday, November 24th at 1:00 p.m.
9. HHPC Opening: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the HHPC needs to recruit someone for the HHPC opening.
10. Announcements:
 - a. HHPC Annual Report: Matt Osborn handed out a draft annual report for the HHPC. He noted that the report is due next month and asked the HHPC to review it and submit any comments to him.
11. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 24th at 1:00 p.m.
12. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.