



Town of Sudbury

Historical Commission

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MINUTES

MARCH 24, 2020

REMOTE TELECONFERENCE MEETING

Members Present: Chair Chris Hagger, Vice-Chair Diana Warren, Diana Cebra, Jan Costa, Steve Greene, Taryn Trexler, and Fred Bautze

Members Absent: Margi Katz

Others Present: Jonathan Detwiler, 153 River Street, Norwell, MA; Jaye Hefner, 79 Nobscot Road; Beth Farrell, 55 Peakham Road; Hillary Crowley, 455 Peakham Road; Cindy Tucker, 85 Raymond and Jamison Tucker, 85 Raymond Road; Duane Houghton, 154 W. Central Street, Natick, MA; Quentin Nowland, 554 Boston Post Road.

Ms. Warren called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Warren summarized the teleconferencing meeting procedures/format to be followed.

79 Nobscot Road – Demolition Delay Bylaw

Ms. Warren provided related history of the property and noted that the Historical Commission conducted a site visit of the property on February 26th and per Section 3 of the Demolition Delay Bylaw, the Commission would discuss historical significance related to 79 Nobscot Road.

Ms. Warren noted that the property was listed in the Sudbury Historic Structures Inventory and with the Mass. Historical Commission, also. The structure is known as the John Brown House or The Deacon William Brown House, listed as being built in 1780. On the site inspection, architectural features indicated that the property was built before 1780, perhaps in the 1730 range due to presence of architectural features of gunstock posts. Mr. Hagger concluded that the property had historical and agricultural significance.

Mr. Detwiler stated that the property was not worthy of reconstruction due to cost and consideration and being a “marginally” constructed dwelling with many additions and significant structural problems.

Ms. Hefner affirmed that upon buying the property, she told the realtors she did not want to buy a property which was under the direction of the Historical Commission. She commented that because the house is unlivable, she and her family had to move out of the property. Ms. Hefner

added that Mr. Detwiler confirmed the property was not constructed by a master craftsman, although does have historic features which could be reproduced. He stated historical renovation would be financially impossible for the owner and she wants to sell the property.

Ms. Warren asked if the property was currently on the market. Ms. Hefner responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Farrell, the realtor for the property, stated the property was listed as a land purchase and prospective buyers agreed it would be far too costly to renovate.

Ms. Warren stressed that per the mission of the Historical Commission and the Demolition Delay Bylaw, the condition of the structure is not relevant.

Mr. Hagger stated that the consideration of the Commission determines historical significance and there would be opportunity to discuss some of the concerns of the property owner. He stressed that the Commission would vote on the historic significance aspect, at this meeting. Mr. Hagger concluded that the property had historical significance, based primarily on the site inspection which recently took place.

Ms. Hefner asked Mr. Hagger what the Commissions credentials were in regard to claiming the property has historical significance, when her renovation specialist has historical architectural credentialing. Ms. Warren responded that the structure was inspected by one of the noted historical historians in MA and she reiterated the condition of the property was not relevant to the determination. Ms. Hefner asked that the Commission's report be read aloud or distributed, in consideration that such specialist never entered the structure. Ms. Warren recommended the report could be accessed on the MA Historical Commission website.

Ms. Trexler stated she had no additional comments to make at this time.

Ms. Cebra affirmed that she walked around the property with the Commission on February 26th and suggested that Ms. Hefner tour the Loring Parsonage, a structure of similar age. She confirmed that 79 Nobscot Road had historical significance.

Mr. Greene agreed the property had historical significance and there would be opportunity to get into a more extensive discussion. He detailed that one of the functions of the Demolition Delay Bylaw was to allow everyone to refocus and explore alternatives to completely demolishing a historic property.

Ms. Costa stated that she was not part of the February 26th site visit and being a resident of Sudbury for some forty years, appreciates the historical character of the Town. She expressed empathy regarding the unlivable status of the house but reinforced that the property is historic.

Jonathan Detwiler acknowledged that this action represented the first step in the process and affirmed the details but indicated the property was not worthy of historical status. He stated that

the next step would involve a public hearing. Mr. Hagger stated the Commission would “only” vote on historical significance of the project.

Ms. Hefner commented there was nothing on the site now that could be considered agricultural history and is a small property with 1.3 acres. She stressed that the property was antique, and not historical.

Mr. Hagger motioned that the building at 79 Nobscot Road is historically significant based on the documented history of the building, in consideration of architectural detail that was affirmed during the Sudbury Historical Commission inspection process of Demolition Delay Bylaw. Ms. Cebra seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Hagger – Aye, Warren – Aye, Cebra – Aye, Costa – Aye, Greene – Aye, and Trexler – Aye.

VOTED: The building at 79 Nobscot Road is determined historically significant based on the documented history of the building, in consideration of architectural detail that was affirmed during the Sudbury Historical Commission inspection process of Demolition Delay Bylaw.

85 Raymond Road – Demolition Delay Bylaw – Public Hearing

Ms. Warren opened the public hearing for 85 Raymond Road at approximately 7:05 PM.

Ms. Warren explained that the applicant requested partial demolition at 85 Raymond Road and a site visit was conducted on January 3, 2020. Following the site visit, the Commission determined the structure had historical significance. She detailed that the Demolition Delay was at stage 4 of the Demolition Delay Bylaw process.

Ms. Warren expressed the Commissions’ appreciation to the applicant’s as they keep the property in historical compliance.

Mr. Houghton outlined the alterations:

- Restoration of the keeping room.
- Change of the screened porch into a kitchen.
- Relocation of window/s.

Ms. Warren confirmed that the only exterior changes were the relocation of the 12 over 12 windows, closing of the screen porch and placement of two double doors where the window was.

Mr. Hagger indicated that the proposed plans were well-done.

Ms. Trexler agreed with the appropriateness of the plans and had no additional comments.

Ms. Cebra indicated the project was reflective of historical preservation and had no further comments.

Mr. Greene commented the plans were consistent with the original design and reflected an insignificant change which adds to the convenience of the home. He extended his appreciation regarding the efforts of the homeowners.

Ms. Costa noted that the complete packet was very clear and thanked the applicants.

Ms. Warren commented that the changes were minimal and the applicants are historically sensitive. She added that the changes were not visible from the public way and changes were not detrimental to the historical nature of the structure.

Ms. Warren affirmed that the Commission did not need to determine that the structure need be preferably preserved and asked the Commission if there was objection to that opinion. The Commission agreed with Ms. Warren's assessment.

Ms. Warren motioned that the Sudbury Historical Commission determined that the proposed changes to 85 Raymond Road as presented in the documents submitted to the Commission, specifically to the exterior, west and north facades; would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the Town, and the structure needs not be preferably preserved and partial Demolition Permit may be issued. Mr. Hagger seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Hagger – Aye, Warren – Aye, Cebra – Aye, Costa – Aye, Greene – Aye, and Trexler – Aye.

VOTED: The Sudbury Historical Commission determined that the proposed changes to 85 Raymond Road as presented in the documents submitted to the Commission, specifically to the exterior, west and north facades would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the Town, and the structure needs not be preferably preserved and partial Demolition Permit may be issued.

Ms. Warren explained that a six-month demolition delay would not be required.

Mr. Houghton extended an invite to the Commission to view the project when it is completed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – 1/7/20, 1/14/20, 2/13/20 and 3/9/20

Ms. Warren mentioned the 1/14/20 minutes would not be presented this evening due to computer difficulties.

Ms. Warren motioned to approve the meeting minutes of 1/7/20.

Roll Call Vote: Hagger – Aye, Warren – Aye, Cebra – Aye, Costa – Aye, Greene – Aye, and Trexler – Aye.

VOTED: To approve the meeting minutes of 1/7/20.

Mr. Hagger questioned the results of a vote item from that meeting and agreed to submit an explanatory sentence to clarify his vote.

Ms. Warren suggested postponing the approval of meeting minutes of motioned to approve the meeting minutes of 1/14/20, 2/13/20 and 3/9/20. The Commission agreed.

Historical Commission Upcoming Meeting Dates and Reschedule of April Meeting to Accommodate Zoom Online Meetings.

The Committee agreed to conduct the next meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2020 and not on April 21, 2020; in consideration of participating in Zoom coverage.

554 Boston Post Road

Ms. Warren detailed that she met with the Building Inspector today, who stated that the Demolition Permit for 554 Boston Post Road was issued on March 18, 2020 for the barn and attached shed. She noted that the property was recently transferred to Stone Farm, LLC. The Building Inspector requested that a video be taken of the barn before demolition so a historical record can be maintained.

Mr. Nowland stated that a plan for the cupola had been submitted.

Ms. Warren stated that the Building Inspector and the Director of Planning and Community Development would be coordinating a site visit of the farmhouse for the Historical Commission members.

Mr. Nowland stated he would be receptive to compiling pictures of the barn and the attached shed (as had been requested by the Historical Commission letter to Mr. Nowland) but could not provide an exact date when the pictures would be provided. Ms. Warren responded that the Commission would greatly appreciate the photographs of the exterior and interior, with focus on the structural nature of the interior and the cupola, and a video would be most appreciated. Mr. Nowland emphasized that at the last meeting when the Committee made such request, he did not own the property and felt he could not respond at the time.

Mr. Nowland stated that due to liability aspects, non-construction people could not enter the property, so the photography aspect must be coordinated before construction work begins. Mr. Nowland responded he would be taking pictures (of the barn) before such construction begun. Ms. Warren asked Mr. Nowland to contact the Historical Society because they may be able to help with the documentation of the barn. Mr. Nowland agreed to speak with the Historical Society.

Members of the Committee thanked Mr. Nowland for providing such pictures of the barn.

Hosmer House Memorial Day Open House Planning

Ms. Warren indicated that it would be rather unlikely that the Hosmer House would conduct an open house on Memorial Day due to Covid-19.

Mr. Bautze stated that the Hosmer House would likely not be open on Memorial Day.

Mr. Bautze detailed that a couple of weeks ago, the Hosmer House basement was cleaned out with many items being sorted, labeled, and boxed. He added that several bags from the basement were thrown out, such as unused decorations: nothing of historical nature.

Ms. Costa asked if any progress has been made regarding professional, historic home cleaners for the Hosmer House. She noted that there was money in the general account for such cleaners and hoped such cleaning would be done by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Bautze indicated that the Hosmer House should be cleaned twice per year – perhaps in late fall and late spring or early summer. Ms. Cebra suggested two heavy cleanings and two lighter cleanings (light dusting, washing of sinks) during the year.

Discussion about available funding and bonding of professional cleaners took place. Ms. Cebra recommended that the bonding topic be presented to Interim Town Manager Bilodeau before the new Town Manager begins, since Interim Town Manager Bilodeau has more familiarity with the topic.

Mr. Hagger indicated that the Facilities Director, Bill Barletta, would be the person to contract with the professional cleaners. Ms. Warren agreed. Ms. Cebra suggested asking who cleans the Town Hall currently. Mr. Hagger commented that the current cleaners likely are not historical building cleaners.

Mr. Bautze confirmed that he would get a letter out to Mr. Barletta.

Members of the committee spoke about establishing a preservation plan. Ms. Warren noted that June 30th reflected the last day of the fiscal year and suggested the Committee continue discussing such planning at the April 16th meeting.

Hosmer House Archiving

Mr. Hagger commented that such archiving could be planned for the next fiscal year. Ms. Costa stated that textile preservation, art preservation and other archiving; would need to be done. Ms. Warren suggested that the Committee examine archiving in the broader picture, (long-term) when reviewing the contents of the Hosmer House.

Mr. Bautze noted that realistically, in the current Covid-19 world, archiving would have to wait until the crisis is over.

Ms. Costa stated the importance of an established preservation plan for the Hosmer House. Mr. Hagger emphasized creating goals and then start with the planning aspect.

Set Date for Historical Commission Meeting

Ms. Warren recommended that the Committee have a workshop/focus meeting to examine what the obligations/duties of the Historical Commission are, in consideration of what needs to happen with Town preservation. She noted the importance of prioritization.

Ms. Warren noted the focus meeting would likely be ongoing and be covered on Zoom. She asked the other Commissioners to give this idea some thought. Ms. Costa asked if the meeting would be conducted by a Commissioner or a facilitator.

Ms. Cebra stated that the focus meeting would present an opportunity to look at projects in advance, which would help with planning. Ms. Warren stressed that preservation planning must take place in order to help advance worthy historic properties.

Ms. Warren stated such meeting process might include two conversations and later expanding to other constituencies, such as the Historical Society, The Wayside Inn Foundation, and the Historic Districts Commission. Mr. Hagger agreed and suggested that after the meetings with the several Town historic groups, a Preservation Town Forum could take place after the Covid-19 crisis is resolved.

Ms. Cebra supported the idea of related joint meetings. Ms. Warren suggested that she and Ms. Cebra work on a plan for an upcoming Historical Commission Meeting/Focus Meeting, as discussed.

Ms. Cebra spoke of a possible meeting with Chris Skelly sometime in the Fall, at a venue for approximately 50 people. She noted that Mr. Skelly would be supportive of an initial meeting being a regional meeting regarding Demolition Delay Bylaw aspects. She indicated that Mr. Skelly would meet with the Sudbury Historical Commission after the regional Demolition Bylaw presentation. Ms. Warren recommended that Gretchen Schuller conduct the first session to give an overview of all the available topics, including Demolition Delay considerations. Mr. Hagger asked about the target audience composition of the proposed forums.

Ms. Cebra indicated that she agreed with Ms. Costa and felt the Demolition Delay Bylaw was not working that well in Sudbury, and for that reason, endorsed a proposed presentation by Mr. Skelly. Mr. Hagger stressed the benefit of other Town officials and other Town boards/committees attending Mr. Skelly's presentation. Ms. Warren concurred the attendance by members of the Select Board, Planning Board and ZBA; would be of great benefit. Ms. Costa offered to commence planning for the meeting and tentatively schedule for the beginning of 2021. Ms. Warren agreed in consideration of the pandemic, such scheduling would be best for the beginning of 2021, with the possibility of recording if meeting restricts were still a consideration.

News of \$15K Grant Award

Ms. Trexler announced the Commission was chosen to receive a \$15,000 grant by the Mass. Historical Commission, dependent upon CPC funding for survey work. She added that the grant would be delayed since the CPC funding vote would be detained due to postponement of Town Meeting. Town Meeting postponement was discussed.

Commissioner Comments

Mr. Greene asked if the Commission should vote to re-appointment Ms. Costa for inclusion in the Select Board agenda for an upcoming meeting, in consideration of her term ending on May 31, 2020. Mr. Hagger responded the Select Board would reach out to Ms. Costa, to determine if she wants to stay on the Commission. Ms. Costa affirmed that she would want to remain a member of the Commission.

Mr. Hagger stated the official vote to re-appoint Ms. Costa would be included on the agenda for the April 16, 2020 meeting. He added that the Commissioner must appoint two candidates, one of which, the Select Board would have to appoint to the Historic Districts Commission before the end of June. He suggested that the Commission consider possible candidates, and discuss those at the April meeting.

Ms. Cebra provided update regarding garden work commencing and seeking further information from the Department of the Interior regarding historic homes and gardening. She noted that the gardening topic would be discussed with the Sudbury Garden Club, remotely. She detailed historically-appropriate plantings are being considered.

Ms. Warren stated she would compose the letter regarding 79 Nobscot Road and 85 Raymond Road.

Ms. Cebra motioned to adjourn the Historical Commission meeting. Mr. Greene seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Hagger – Aye, Warren – Aye, Cebra – Aye, Costa – Aye, Greene – Aye, and Trexler – Aye.

VOTED: To adjourn the Historical Commission meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM