

Holliston Historical Commission
Minutes of January 18, 2023

Present: Frank Chamberlain, Carol Kosicki, Sara Zarrelli, Ben Clarkson, James Keast, Mary Greendale.

Frank Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 7:10.

Long Range Plan for Historical Preservation

1. Design Standards: MG reported that she met with Travis on the 17th to discuss how to get standards developed. They discussed a possible five-person committee, perhaps seven, with one person an architect and another from the Historical Commission. MG reminded TA that the Design Review Committee is mentioned in the Zoning By-laws and whatever a committee would do needs to match with the language there, or the language needs to be changed. The ball is in Travis's hands to contact relevant committees about interest in participating and deciding whether this will advance to Town Meeting this May or later. He has copies of Bedford and Walpole standards as examples.

2. Demolition delay – another zoning issue, the Commission discussed whether the bylaw should be changed.

Frank reported that he presented the issue to Travis on the 17th.

The current bylaw delay is six months – should it be longer?

Should we be more specific about partial vs. full demolitions? If partial, if applicant wants to exceed our approval, should they be required to return to the committee for permission?

Do we list an order of conditions in our approvals? Can we? (Need to ask Town Counsel.) What if they go ahead without approval? Possibly stop the project for the full extent of the delay period as financial penalty.

What if the historical property is outside the districts? Is that different?

Do we need a thorough inventory of all significant properties that we are trying to protect? What do we need for data to defend our calling them significant? (Again, may need Town Counsel. Frank to ask Travis.)

We do have the dates of properties from Assessors and the dates listed in the Proposal for a Historical District from 2002. Those two don't match. If we do inventory of houses, can we add names of original owners and get better "built" dates?

We are coming up on 75 years old for developments like Queens. Committee not inclined to classify them as historical properties that are subject to Demo Delay.

Do we need a consultant? Sara will reach out to people who might have a good idea how to proceed. Can we get an intern to help with data collection? Sara will help James with the intern selection by providing a position description.

Other towns list risks (Sherborn, e.g.) and one of them is the risk of teardowns and McMansions. Make sure Demo Bylaws link to the design standards, for example, house size in proportion to lot.

What about neglect? How does that factor in? If someone ignores a property until it's falling down, should they be allowed to demolish? (Ex.- Batchelder house on Jasper Hill?)

Right now, 75 years is our target date to require permit from HC. Is that the right date?

Captain Miller's grave

James has spoken with an expert in Natick about grave repairs at Miller's tomb. We need a cost estimate before he can approach CPC.

Cemetery Repair

The survey of cemeteries is progressing. James is nearly done with the RFP.

Committee agreed to start work on Central Burying Ground and then proceed to East, South and North cemeteries as funds allow.

Keast advised that the house immediately adjacent to North Cemetery needs a new septic system. He is working with the contractor to ensure that there is no damage to the cemetery.

Minutes

Minutes of November 16, approved 5-0-1 abstention. Mary Greendale was not at meeting.

Minutes of January 11, approved, 4-0-2 abstentions, Keast and Clarkson were not at meeting.

Next Meeting is February 15, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by:
Mary Greendale