

ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2020
7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Bob Ferrara (BF), Victoria Beyer (VB), Doug Herrick (DH), Bill Dickinson (BD) – (Chair), Dean Charter (DC) - (BoS Liaison), Bill Klauer (BK)

Absent: Jaye Oman (JO), Brad Maxwell (BM)

1. Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson opened the meeting at 7:37 p.m. and read the procedures and agreed-on policies the Town developed for these web-based Zoom meetings.

2. Regular Business

- 1) Approval of June Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the AHC’s June 2020, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0.
- 2) Citizen Concerns: No citizens’ concerns. Anne Forbes stated that she would address any concerns during the PAL CRL-to-MACRIS Update agenda item.
- 3) Any ZBA/Planning Board projects on the CRL: DH stated that he had reviewed the meeting agendas and hearings of the ZBA and did not recognize any known historic properties for review.
- 4) PAL Associates – CRL to MACRIS Update: JO was absent so BD will reach out to her about the project status and the final review of the forms and work to-date. Anne Forbes expressed a concern about the accuracy of the final forms given PAL’s tendency to use Internet-based information vs. primary source and field research. As an example she explained the error in the PAL map defining the Town Common that should have included building frontages along Main Street that belonged to the Town and the Common beyond just the triangle site.
- 5) Bridge Project between Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and TTT: BD presented a PowerPoint presentation on the foot-bridge link between the Trail-Through-Time and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. His designs for several bridge types using wood and iron rod

reinforcements would not require permits. Different truss and self-supporting options were discussed. BD will discuss these options with the Nashoba Brook Conservation Land Stewards.

- 6) Archaeological By-Law Update: BF discussed the updates and changes he made to his draft by-law. He reviewed the triggers that would generate an archaeological review: 1) Request for a building permit or zoning variance, 2) Planning Board development request, 3) Conservation Commission or Land Use department request, or 4) Report from a town department of extensive removal of vegetation or ground cover on undeveloped land. Additional questions about an appeal process, who pays for archaeological reviews, and other concerns will continue to be explored.
- 7) Demolition Delay Application/Instruction Form: A draft form was reviewed for the Building Department to use. Based on discussions about the problem we are trying to solve with the form, it was agreed to add more text explaining the demolition delay process to the applicant, and to get more input from Frank Ramsbottom on what information he would find useful. DH will send the draft to Frank for his input.

3. New/Special Business

- 1) 53 River Street: The group reviewed the ongoing project and activities being conducted by the Town, MMI, and PAL as they move forward on the proposal to remove the Fort Pond Brook dam and build a historic park on the site of the Old Shoddy Mill. The AHC is making every effort to have the Town acknowledge their role in the process and have a seat at the table during these discussions. The AHC voted unanimously 5-0 to begin the process of applying for National Register status for the site.
- 2) Plaque Requests for 491 Main Street and 88 Prospect Street: BM was absent so BD will follow up with him on the outstanding applications.
- 3) Review Notes: MHC Stone Wall Seminar: BF led a discussion of historic stone walls and summarized the issues addressed in a recent seminar. Questions arose concerning their protection, re-use of stones by owners, and their preservation as archaeological artifacts. DC stated that boundary walls can't be moved and stone walls bordering scenic byways are protected.
- 4) Review 66 School Street Special Permit Application: The owner wishes to build a new barn on a non-conforming lot to replace the original barn that collapsed in 2017. The

design was previously communicated to the AHC and is historically appropriate and similar in appearance to the original. The AHC has no issues with the proposal.

4. Consent Items - None

5. Adjournment: At 9:31 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of June 2020