

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 20, 2019
Draft Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Present: DPW Director Hannah Tyler, Town Manager Brannon Godfrey and Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown.

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held in Room 2, Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Hartford Village Bridge: Town Manager Brannon Godfrey and Department of Public Works Director Hannah Tyler were present to discuss the Hartford Village Bridge Project. Brannon Godfrey distributed a VTrans powerpoint presentation on the Bridge that was presented at a recent Selectboard meeting. According to VTrans, “the Bridge is structurally deficient due to superstructure condition.” Hannah Tyler noted that the Bridge had temporary repair work done in December and is inspected by VTrans every 12 months. Brannon reported that the life cycle costs favor full replacement which the Selectboard favors since it also will improve safety and bring the bridge up to modern engineering standards. He noted that the process requires review by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation since the Bridge was built in 1929. The Town will be required to prepare a purpose and need statement in order to justify replacement over rehabilitation.

Robin Adair Logan expressed concern about the present condition of the Bridge. The consensus of the Commission was the Bridge does not possess important historic features worthy of preservation that would preclude replacement with a bridge that would meet current engineering standards.

Pat Stark noted the importance of the remnants of the former mill’s canal along the south bank of the White River and hoped the remnants would not be disturbed. Hannah Tyler responded that the alignment would not likely affect the remnants of the canal.

Robin Adair Logan made a motion to support replacement of the Hartford Village Bridge. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved by a 5 to 0 vote. Jonathan Schechtman thanked Brannon Godfrey and Hannah Tyler for coming before the Historic Preservation Commission to discuss the Hartford Village Bridge Project.

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any additions to the agenda. Matt Osborn suggested the White River Junction Historic District. Pat Stark suggested the Hartford Historical Society History Trivia Night. Robin Adair Logan suggested the Twin Pines Housing Trust Development Project in Wilder and the Quechee Community Church. The HHPC agreed.
3. Minutes of the January 16th HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of January 16th. Being none, Roy Black made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 16th as written. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved.
4. Cemetery Research/Oral History Project: Matt Osborn reported that Coherit Associates has been busy with the cemetery project. He noted that Angela Labrador has been doing research at the state archives. She will soon devote her attention to Town records. Angela also has mapped all of the cemeteries except Potter’s Field using G.I.S. software. Neil Silberman has completed seven of the ten interviews so far including:
 - I. Arthur Peale, Gardens of Stone
 - II. Jeff Knight, Knight Funeral Home
 - III. John Newton, West Hartford Cemetery
 - IV. Larry Hudson & Jim Dow, Quechee Cemetery
 - V. Mary Ann Devins, Hartford Historical Society Genealogist

- VI. Sherry & Stephanie West, Assistant Town Clerk & daughter
- VII. John Guarino, Mount Olivet Cemetery & Old St. Anthony's Cemetery

Others to be interviewed include Barbara Hazen, Christian Street Cemetery; Ralph Knight, Knight Funeral Home and a second interview with Arthur Peale.

Matt noted that a community meeting on the project will be held in June once the interviews and the written report have been completed.

- 5. Town Plan Update: Matt Osborn reported that the Planning Commission will be holding public hearings on the Draft Town Plan on Monday, March 25th and April 1st. Work on the next update will begin in the fall.
- 6. Town Meeting Day Coffee with Committees: Jonathan Schechtman reported that the HHPC table at the Town Meeting generated some interest and visits from the public. He thought it was good to have the HHPC participate in the event. Dennis Brown asked if there is anything to improve the event. Pat Stark responded to have a lunch break at Town Meeting to give people a chance to visit the displays.
- 7. Annual CLG Grant Application: Matt Osborn reported that the application for an intensive level survey for the Taft's Flat residential area was awarded funding by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Matt stated that he hopes to work on the Request for Proposals in April.
- 8. Quechee Gorge Bridge: Matt Osborn reported that there is a meeting on the Quechee Gorge Bridge rehabilitation scheduled for Monday, April 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the Hartford Town Hall. According to the invitation, "Gill Engineering will receive public input on design elements of the planned bridge project. Sidewalks, railings, and barrier fencing options will be displayed before final project plans are drawn up. This will be the last opportunity for the public to voice its preference on design elements – while plans are still preliminary. After the preliminary plan is refined and approved by VTrans, final plans for the project will be developed in 2019-20." Matt noted that if HHPC members have comments, they should attend the meeting. .
- 9. History Trivia Night: Pat Stark reported that the Hartford Historical Society sponsored Vermont History Trivia event in Wilder was a success. The Historical Society will sponsor future history trivia events in other villages.
- 10. Proposed Twin Pines Housing Trust Development in Wilder: There was a discussion regarding the Twin Pines Housing Trust application for a four-plex in Wilder Village across from Datamann on Hartford Avenue. There was acknowledgement that the Zoning Board of Adjustment review criteria includes character of the area, but the Planning Commission has no authority to look at building design. Matt Osborn noted that some Wilder residents expressed interest in a design review district for Wilder Village. Matt also reported that the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission applications were approved. However, the ZBA decision has been appealed by neighbors of the project.
- 11. White River Junction Historic District Nomination: Matt Osborn reported that the consultant Brian Knight has been working on revisions to the Nomination based on review by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. It is expected that the Nomination will be reviewed by the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in the near future.
- 12. Quechee Community Church: Robin Adair Logan asked Pat Stark if the Hartford Historical Society has an easement on the Quechee Community Church. Pat responded yes. Any changes to the exterior of the Church require approval of the Historical Society.
- 13. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan Schechtman noted that the next HHPC Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17th.
- 14. Adjournment: Pat Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Roy Black and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.