

ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2020
7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Bob Ferrara (BF), Victoria Beyer (VB), Doug Herrick (DH), Bill Dickinson (BD) – (Chair), Bill Klauer (BK), Brad Maxwell (BM)

Absent: Jaye Oman (JO), Dean Charter (DC) - (Select Board Liaison)

1. Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson opened the meeting at 7:33 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 September Meeting Minutes** – The meeting minutes from the AHC's September 2020, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 6-0.
- 2) **Citizen Concerns:** A citizen's email was read in which a purchaser of 615 Mass. Ave. asked about grants or funding options to restore this property. Nobody was aware of any, but BD will respond to him. Anne Forbes brought up the issue of creating a MACRIS area form for the ruins of the Marlborough Branch railroad in South Acton. There is an area adjoining the Assabet River Rail Trail that contains the remnants of the original turntable and engine house. It was agreed that this should be investigated and Anne volunteered to take this effort on.
- 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 follow-up with her on the status. He said he believed that the project was finished and the final invoice was approved for payment.
- 5) **Bridge Project between Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and TTT:** BD continued to socialize this project with a presentation to the Community Preservation Committee for

their feedback. He will also get input from the Conservation Commission.

- 6) **Archaeological By-Law Update:** BF reviewed his presentation to the Select Board on the draft by-law to solicit their feed-back. They responded positively and encourage him to continue his efforts, focusing next on the Planning Board and getting the input of Town Counsel. In addition, it was recommended that community meetings be scheduled. It was agreed that reaching out to Town Counsel should be the next step given the lead time for this process, then followed by the Planning Board. BF will talk to DC about the best way to engage Town Counsel.
- 7) **53 River Street Update:** BK stated that he had heard from Selby that an archaeological survey contractor had been hired to begin the investigation of the site for historic elements. The first step will be the defoliating and clearing of the area which will need the approval of the Conservation Commission.

3. **New/Special Business**

- 1) **Plaque Requests for 88 Prospect Street, and 292 Central Street:** The outstanding applications for plaques were reviewed and discussed. BM and VB are coordinating the transition of this project to VB.
- 2) **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Semaphore Restoration:** DH stated that he had received an inquiry from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail about restoring the remnants of a signaling semaphore on section 2B of the trail under construction in Acton near the State Police horse barn. Concord had done a similar restoration of the remnants of a semaphore in the West Concord section. Unfortunately the individual who had done that restoration passed away and the BFRT contractor was not interested in supporting the restoration of the Acton semaphore which is slated for removal. Because attempts to find someone to do work at a reasonable cost were unsuccessful, and the existing semaphore pole and wiring boxes were heavily rusted through, a complete replacement would be necessary. AHC was not enthusiastic about continuing the cost and effort to take this project on.

4. **Consent Items - None**

5. **Adjournment:** At 8:29 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously 6-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of September 2020