

ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
November 11, 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), Dean Charter (DC) - (Select Board Liaison)

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

1. Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson opened the meeting at 7:32 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 October Meeting Minutes** – The meeting minutes from the AHC’s October 2020, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0.
- 2) **Citizen Concerns:** BK stated that the 1927 South Square fire station in South Acton, currently owned by the town, was put on the surplus building list. He stated a preference for a proposal from Habitat for Humanity to renovate it and preserve it as a single family home. Anne Forbes expressed concerns about the integrity of the Historical Commission mailing list given the number of instances where recipients stated they had not received emails. There was a discussion about the cause possibly being spam filters and settings on individual computers. The HC will follow up with the town IT staff. Citizens’ concerns dealing with 19-21 Maple Street were deferred until that agenda item below.
- 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:** It was announced that the project manager, JO, intends to resign from the AHC, so BD will take over. The project is finished and all hard copies of the inventory forms produced will be given to BD.

- 5) **Bridge Project between Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and TTT:** BD updated the group on his discussions with Tom Tidman who suggested breaking the project into two CPC funding phases: a study and plan phase and next year the construction phase.
- 6) **Archaeological By-Law Update:** The next step with this project is to meet with Town Counsel to review the draft. BF discussed his meeting with the CPC to solicit their advice on the proposal to request a pool of money for the archaeological survey consulting that is triggered as part of the by-law.
- 7) **53 River Street Update:** DC provided an update from the Town Manager stating that Gray & Pape Heritage Consultants had been chosen to conduct the archaeological survey. Concern was again expressed that the AHC had not been a party to either the creation of the scope statement for this work or part of the selection process. DC will attempt to obtain the scope statement for the AHC.
- 8) **South Acton Branch Railroad Area Form Update:** A discussion was held about developing an area form for the area between Route 27 and Maple Street containing the ruins and foundations of the old Marlborough Branch engine house and turntable.

3. New/Special Business

- 1) **Plaque Requests for 88 Prospect Street, and 292 Central Street:** The outstanding applications for plaques were reviewed and discussed. All applications are up-to-date.
- 2) **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Semaphore Restoration:** Based on comments from the previous meeting, the AHC has declined to take this project on.
- 3) **19-21 Maple Street:** Terra Friedrichs and Anne Forbes expressed concerns about the recent town presentation and survey asking residents and users of the South Acton Train Station about their preferences for the use of the town-owned Maple Street site. They felt the survey was skewed towards parking issues and did not effectively balance the concerns of neighborhood residents and Acton users with regional parking needs. Statements were made about documenting and eliminating the input of out-of-town respondents. Alissa Nicole expressed concern about the amount of parking needed given the changes in telecommuting that the pandemic had created along with the cutbacks in mass transit. It was agreed that the HC would draft a letter recommending its preservation position relative to historic building on the site.

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 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of October 2020