



ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2021
7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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

Absent: Dean Charter (DC) - (Select Board Liaison)

1. Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson opened the meeting at 7:38 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 January Minutes** – The meeting minutes from the AHC's January 2021, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0.
- 2) **Citizen Concerns:** Anne Forbes and Alissa Nicol expressed concerns about the design and orientation of the 66 Maple Street development proposal. It was felt that the amount of ad hoc development in the area warranted an update of the South Acton Village Master Plan to guide decision-making. They also encouraged the AHC to send representatives to the upcoming town-sponsored 19-21 Maple Street meeting. Anne Forbes also stated that the instructions on the Plaque Program need to be updated on the AHC web site.
- 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) **Bridge Project between Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and TTT:** BD had no updates as the CPC application for funding was still under review.
- 5) **Archaeological By-Law Update:** RF updated the group on Town Counsel's review of the project. Although it was ruled a "Judgement Call" by Anderson Kreiger in their review of the CPC applications, they are still deliberating on the merits of the proposal as



a new by-law.

- 6) **Historic House Plaque Requests Update:** VB and BM will work together to finish off any remaining requests and communicate with homeowners who have not provided all the information needed for moving forward on these requests.
- 7) **53 River Street Update:** BK and DH updated the group in writing about their concerns regarding the recent 53 River Street Committee meeting. DH stated that the Committee still does not fully understand that neither they nor the town have the final say in their plans to demolish the dam or remove historic elements from the site. That will be decided through the Section 106 process overseen by the Mass. Historical Commission. In addition, there were concerns about the River Street's 2021 CPC application that requests \$100k in historic and recreation funds "to complete the engineering and permitting of the dam" without any historic or recreation components. This issue of appropriate use of CPC funding was raised in a December 2019 Anderson Krieger letter ruling that a "binding commitment that only CPA-eligible uses of the property will be undertaken" and that a historic restriction agreement on the site be drafted. Both were never done. The AHC will write letters to the 53 River St. Committee and the Select Board expressing their concerns.

3. New/Special Business

- 1) **Review and Comment on Dwelling by-law:** This issue of exploring the possibility of permitting multi-family use and conversions for buildings within historic districts was discussed. It was agreed that BD would write a response to the Planning Dept. supporting allowing full use of properties in the Historic Districts and structures identified on the CRL and MACRIS. This assumes that exterior restrictions on the buildings themselves are retained and the HDC reviews and approves all applications. The need for a date restriction was questioned and concerns about the increased parking requirements were also discussed.
- 2) **Status of Converting CRL to MACRIS:** Questions arose as to whether the new area forms recently created had been entered into MACRIS. It appears that some had while others had not. BD will follow up.
- 3) **Review of 66 Maple Street Architectural Drawings:** The proposed plans for retaining and expanding the existing historical building and adding another building to the lot at 66 Maple Street were discussed. Concern was expressed that although the buildings were architecturally compatible with the neighborhood, the elevation of the single family home was not. The orientation of the buildings and main entrances toward the side yard was also seen as problematic given the general street orientation of the neighborhood. BD will write a letter to the developers summarizing our concerns and suggesting changes.



4. Consent Items - None

5. Adjournment: At 9:42 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 January 2021