

## Harvard Historic Commission – January 4, 2011

Members present: D. Coots, C. Cutler, J. Feist (Chair), J. Martin, R. Minar, R. Saalfield, R. Sprague, K. Swanton, J. Wollaston

Meeting called to order at: 7: 32 p.m.

- minutes of the December, 2010 meeting were amended and unanimously approved
- commissioners reviewed Feist's draft of the HHC report to appear in the Harvard Annual Report (distributed at ATM)
- 7:35 p.m. hearing commenced on the property at 14 Fairbanks Street owned by Daria Swanton. Ms. Swanton hopes to remove an existing bay window on the north façade of the house, replacing this with 3 new double-hung windows, wood-framed, simulated divided lights. Commissioners voted that the change proposed is a substantial one and therefore requires a public hearing.
- At 8:05 p.m Jennifer Candon appeared for a hearing regarding work planned on an outbuilding on her property at 25 Oak Hill Road. Commissioners voted that the proposed changes are substantial and will require a public hearing and additional supporting documentation.
- At 8:40 Ron Ostberg, Chair of the Municipal Bldg Committee, updated the commission on his group's recent work. MBC will present their final report to the BoS within the next month.
- The group's findings include the recommendation that all three bldgs under study (Town Hall, former library, Hildreth House) should remain in the town's possession. The MBC will propose, e.g., that the old library be used as a not-for-profit community/arts center. How renovations to the bldg would be funded or what the terms of the lease would be are not detailed at this time. If the group running the old library as a community center also assumed responsibility for the Upper Town Hall then

performance could be added to the list of arts and entertainment options.

- The MBC recommends that for the time being the old library continue operating under the model it has trialed for the last months, without immediate plans for renovation.
- The Hildreth House was a gift to town and was lightly renovated years ago for the Council on Aging. The MBC feels that this is a great site and bldg for the growing constituency of aging baby boomers. The bldg is in very good shape and has room for expansion, though access to this hilltop site is admittedly a problem. The concept of entering the bldg/site at a lower elevation has been proposed and the addition of '2500 sf of program' would be addressed. (COA does not work in the old library, a proposal that some people have made. The dangers proposed by traffic at the old library site are substantial.)
- Town Hall has two programs : paid town staff and volunteer government, now crowded out of this space. The MBC would like to see all these government functions aggregated into one space. The MBC would also like to see the Upper Town Hall liberated and returned to the town as a performance space.
- The MBC has asked the Capital Comm for 250k for the design of Phase One to take the project through bidding. Cost estimators have guessed that Phase One would cost in the neighborhood of 4m, absent the 500-600k probably needed for the renovation of the Upper Town Hall, a number Ostberg points out is a 'great donor number for a private philanthropic effort'. (Ostberg acknowledged that the funding climate is less auspicious now than it was for the library project then he is encouraged to think a similar effort could be made for these special buildings.)
- Public funding could be available for those aspects of the job relating to accessibility and energy conservation. MBC members would like to see the CPC setting aside as much as 100k a year for historic preservation. The MBC will also begin strategizing with the members of HEAC about how we might leverage our new status as a Green Community.
- Ostberg outlined his hopes of how the HHC might be involved going forward: in the design process, going forward; urging town

- officials to be very careful in their choice of a talented architectural design team; as active members of the design review process as the various designs mature; in participating in the permitting process, as required from time to time. A preservation architect will be involved in the process and the HHC could help understand and support this person or firm's involvement. The HHC can also help advocate at ATM and the polls in support of this program. Ostberg would like the HHC to create a sub-committee that would research sources of funds.
- In summation, Ostberg said that he thought the group's work had vision and a pragmatic approach. One of his dreams has been, for 25 years, to bound the town center as the area between the front door of Hldreth House (asphalt removed) to the boat house he hopes will one day be built on the foundation of the old boat house at Bare Hill Pond. (In the MBC plan the asphalt would also be removed from the front side of Town Hall.
  - Ostberg will present to the BoS at their February meeting and he would like to be able to list those who support the MBC efforts at that time.
  - Shaker Burial Ground: Saalfield reported that the Cemetery Commissioners have officially voted not to use the monies awarded by the CPC for the hiring of a consultant to write an RFP on the Shaker marker restoration. Commissioners agreed unanimously to work on a volunteer study group with members of the CC whose charge will be to research the proper methodology of restoring the markers and the associated costs. Saalfield will contract Whit Sprague on the CC to discuss next steps, making it clear to the members of the CC that HHC would still vastly prefer to proceed with this project with the help of a specialist.

Respectfully submitted

Roseanne Saalfield

