

Approved Minutes
Harvard Historical Commission
July 6, 2011, Monthly Meeting
Periodical Room, Old Library

Members Present: Roseanne Saalfield, John Martin, Jonathan Feist, Rhonda Sprague, Doug Coots, Chris Cutler, Jared Wollaston & Pam Marston (New Commission Member).

Members Absent: Ken Swanton

Audience Attendees: Timothy Bragan, Town Administrator, Mary Arata. Harvard Hillside Newspaper, Jack Spero, Bruce Dolimount, Whit Sprague, Cheryl Grenier & Nelson Northern Note, Still River resident Deborah Skaun Hinchcliffe was in attendance and did not choose to sign in. She indicated that she was recording the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Rosanne Saalfield at 7:10 P.M. She noted that alternate member, John Martin will be taking Chris Cutler's position as Chris has to attend another meeting and will return after that meeting. Jonathan Feist will be covering for Ken Swanton who is absent.

Note: The sequence of discussion numbered agenda items will vary during the meeting.

- The minutes of the June 3, 2011 were reviewed and approved by the Commission. It was noted that John Martin had taken the minutes of the June 20, 2011 special meeting for the Shaker Burial Ground. Those minutes will be available for the next meeting in August.
- New Commission Member. Rosanne formally introduced new commission member Pam Marston who will be taking Rudy Minar's position as he is going to be on the Town Finance Committee.
She asked Pam to provide the Commission with a brief background. Pam noted that she has lived in Harvard for 40 years and that she has seen Harvard go from a more rural town to more of a bedroom community of Boston. She is interested in the town's growth and understands that reasonable growth requires some sound controls. She plans on being a cooperative and energetic member. She hopes that residents of the Harvard Historic Districts understand that access to the Commission is open and welcoming. She feels that the Commission is a valuable resource for being of assistance to residents as they embark on exterior renovations and improvements to their properties in the Historic District. She is interested in the Commission's input and review of the town center plans for the Town Hall renovation and the Old Library alterations. She has reviewed the 2008 Harvard Historical District Guidelines and noted that she is a retired Bolton school teacher where she taught math. She noted that Rosanne has asked her to be of assistance with the Historical Plague project as well as being of assistance with the draft Commission Rules and Procedures project. All welcomed Pam and we look forward to having her on the Commission.

- Format Roll Call Procedure. Roseanne requested that the minutes reflect that we need a new revised Commission member contact sheet and updated e-mail addresses.
6. Update on all Boards meeting/Strategic Plan. Roseanne summarized the recent all Boards meeting held in mid June. All town Boards have been requested to initiate and write goals for each Board for the next one to five years. She noted that exact strategic initiative may be difficult but we need to work on this initiative. The dead line to complete these goals is September 7, 2011.

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6.(cont.) Rosanne mentioned that in her June 15th e-mail she provided more clarification of this issue and will resend it to Commission members as a basis for future discussion. Doug Coots suggested that this should be an evolving document which should be reviewed at our August meeting and suggested that we make it as simple and straightforward as possible. John Martin suggested that we consider two categories: What we expect to do & what we hope to do in coordination with other Boards.

7. Discuss By-Law Changes re: Shaker Hill Burial Ground. Roseanne reviewed the June 20th meeting with The Historical Commission, the Cemetery Committee and with Jeff Gould from Central Massachusetts Powder Coating Company. There continues to be a difference of opinion between the Commission and the Cemetery Committee as what is the best process to restore the Shaker metal historic grave markers. Basically it appears the Cemetery Committee feels comfortable with the power coating process for restoring the markers and feels that this is the best way to proceed. Members of the Commission continue to be disturbed with this process and had hoped that the issue would have been resolved through having a consultant provide input into restoring and preserving these markers. There actually were allocated funds from the CPC to have a consultant but those funds were not used for the consultant due to some differences of opinions between the Commission and the Committee. Ken Swanton will work on an initiative for a by-law change with the Planning Board to clarify the Historic Commission's authority and input in restoring historical artifacts such as these Shaker Markers which are in a Harvard Historical District. John Martin noted we need an accurate description of the process. Jonathan reiterated that there were CPC funds made available for this other opinion/consultant but the Cemetery Committee disagreed and felt that it was a waste of money. The Historical Commission had several quotes from consultants to evaluate the best restoration process. The consultant quotes were between \$5,600 and \$17,000. The CPC approved funds for this were \$5,655. Jonathan noted that there are three issues. What is the best process for metal marker restoration ? Who is responsible for the project management ? Whether we should be paying for external project management ? How can the Historical Commission make right the process ?

Doug Coots noted that HHC has the right to ask for an application from any owner or caretakers of properties in the Historic District for any exterior changes to properties in the district. We are obligated through the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Chapter 40C Massachusetts general laws for design review for any visible (from a public way) changes, improvements and repairs in an historical district. We do need a legal opinion as to our authority with this issue. It comes down to whether the town wants the added protection of HHC involvement in protecting historical artifacts such as these Shaker markers which are located in an historical district. Jonathan further noted that the HHC does not have jurisdiction over major cemetery management but HHC is concerned with protecting historic artifacts located in our Historic Districts.

8. Present draft of HHC job description. Roseanne passed out copies of the past draft of the job description which again was reviewed and discussed. It is close to a final draft. Roseanne noted that Pam will assist with the proposed Rules and Procedures project.

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10. Historic buildings' plaque project. Roseanne noted that Rudy Minar had completed some research on historic building markers/plaques. Pam & Jared will continue on with this project. Roseanne discussed her recent conversation with Jane Guy from Salem Massachusetts Historical Commission about plaques and markers. During this discussion on plaques Roseanne brought up a past board decision on the Hayes Property at 2-6 Littleton Road regarding replacement windows and noted that a letter had been sent to the owners from building inspector Gabriel Vellante on June 27, 2011 about this issue. He noted that a building permit is necessary to evaluate that the windows comply with the proper energy "U" values.

11. Real estate listing team/HHC enforcement. Jared and Rhonda presented a draft of the notifications to real estate firms and new owners as reminders that a property is located in an Historic District. It has come to the Commission's attention that some buyers are not properly notified that a property is in an historic district and that all exterior changes/improvement/repairs as seen from a public way must come before the commission for approval before those changes are made. These notifications are meant to resolve this issue. Pam suggested that we might also send out notices to all current owners as a reminder that their property is located in an historic district. Roseanne noted that Jared had the town center historic district marker on Still River Road moved to a more appropriate location.

13. Other business. Chris noted that energy conservation issues are pushing for more interest in solar panels and that the town is looking for a chosen contractor to give some guide lines on this popular new solar energy resource. It is apparent that Historical Commissions will be involved with this issue in the future and we may need input from the Massachusetts Historical Commission as to how do we handle this issue in an historic district. Jonathan

noted that the town removed some large Sugar Maple trees in Shaker Village. They were old and had some decay. HHC has no jurisdiction on tree maintenance/removal. As noted above the HHC district marker along Still River Road was moved to a more appropriate location.

- Town Hall application. Town Manager, Tim Bragan discussed the proposed changes/repairs to the Town Hall. An exterior building conditions inspection and report has been completed using a portion of the \$100,000 CPC funds. There are extensive repairs necessary before painting can take place. After much discussion it was determined and unanimously voted by the HHC that this work involved Substantial Changes and that a more formal project scope of work and details be presented to the HHC at the August meeting.
- Public Comment. There were no public comments.

With no further business, Roseanne asked for a motion to adjourn which was seconded and voted upon to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 and Roseanne read some excerpts from The Direction of a Town.

Respectfully Submitted, Jared

Wollaston HHC member.