

# **NORTHBOROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

## **Meeting Minutes for September 12, 2018**

**Present:** Norm Corbin, Amy White, Stephanie Stockman, Leslie Harrison, Bruce Chute, Brian Smith (Alternate), Michael Duchesneau (Alternate)

**Guests:** Julianne Hirsh (Selectwoman), James Venincase (owner of 156 Pleasant St), Sean Kenney (191 Pleasant St.)

The Chairman called the public hearing to order at 7:00pm.

### **Public hearing regarding the Demolition Request for 156 Pleasant St.**

- Prior to the public hearing the NHDC conducted research on the property in the following ways.
  - Reviewed the inventory sheet on file with the MHC from 2007.
  - Reviewed information found at The Northborough Historical Society
  - NHDC and the Northborough Historical Society did a walk-thru of the property.
- The inventory sheets refer to the property as to having a lot of historical integrity and architectural significance from the outside.
- From the walk-thru it was determined that there are a lot of remaining historical architectural features on the inside.
- From the Northborough Historical Society the following information was obtained.
  - In 1986, Betty Russell, the previous owner of the property, did a program on the history of the property, and donated her findings to the Northborough Historical Society. Some of the information about the property is as follows.
    - Timothy Faye, a Revolutionary War soldier, lived at the house.
    - The property was a working farm
    - Dr. Stephen Ball, Jr, a physician in Northborough lived there.
      - George Allen, a Revolutionary War veteran, lived there.
    - The Russells bought the property in 1963, with the original 63 acres, and have sold off the land over the years.
- There was no additional information about the property added at the public hearing.
- Leslie Harrison made a motion that the property at 156 Pleasant Street is both architecturally and historically significant. This was seconded by Amy White, and it passed unanimously.
- Mr. Venincase asked if parts of the house could be removed. Norm stated that he could not remove any parts of the house, while the demolition delay was in process.
  - Norm reviewed ideas of what could happen during the delay process.
    - The property could be placed on the Endangered Resource List via Worcester Preservation.
    - Mr. Venincase reviewed a letter received on 9/11/18

- The letter stated that the decision should be made in September.
  - Northborough Affordable Housing Authority might be interested in the property.
    - Norm will contact Rick Leif to see if this is a possibility.
  - This Old House
    - Through Michael's contact at *This Old House Ventures LLC*, we were able to contact Eric Thorkilsen (CEO).
      - They are interested in finding out more information about the property.
  - Possible contacts for saving the home
    - Norm contacted Old Sturbridge Village
      - Not looking to purchase a new home
    - *Country Register* Newspaper
      - Amy Carter contacted Norm with a price for an ad
    - Yankee Magazine
      - No response
    - Circa – advertise online for free
    - Historic properties – advertise online for free
    - Old houses.com – advertise online for free
    - preservationregistry.com
    - National Trust for Historical Preservation – website, and put info
    - Old House Dreams – online free
  - Some advertisements cost \$25-\$200 for 2-6 months
  - Norm would like to find 4-6 more online resources to advertise the property.
- Julianne Hirsh inquired whether of the NHDC has a state organization, and if it would be possible to contact them or other towns for ideas.
- The NHDC would like to ask Karen Scopetski (the realtor of the property) to visit us with an update on the property in December.

A motion was made by Amy White and seconded by Bruce Chute to end the public hearing at 8:00. It passed unanimously.

### **NHDC Monthly Meeting**

The chairman called the monthly meeting to order at 8:01

- **Previous Meeting Minutes** - A motion was made by Amy White and seconded by Leslie to accept the meeting minutes of August 15, 2018 with the edit of 156 Pleasant St. It passed unanimously.

#### **Old Business**

- Colonial Headstones Preservation Project
  - Ongoing
- Meeting House Historic Sign
  - It's on the list to be placed.
- White Cliffs Reuse Committee Update

- The next meeting is in 2 weeks.
- CPA Project Requests for FY- 20
  - These were submitted.
- Temporary Signs installed on Historic District Properties
  - Norm asked Andy to send him the current sign bylaw.
- Letters of Appreciation
  - Bartlett St. letter sent out
  - Historic homes on Park and Winn St.
- Additional Alternate Members
  - On hold until we can speak to Alex
- Applefest Schedule
  - Setup 8:30-11:00 – Amy and Norm
  - 11:00-1:00 – Michael
  - 1:00-3:00 – Bruce and Steph
- The Master Plan Committee needs input from us regarding historic preservation over the next 20 years.
  - Goal: maintain and expand the protection of Northborough’s historic resources including buildings...
    - Add several new historic districts within the town
    - Add several properties to the National Register of Historic Places
    - Find a way to work with developers and homeowners to consider Restorations & Remodeling antique properties rather than demolition.
    - Coordination with other committees and town staff and boards
    - Influencing bylaws
    - To be placed on the agenda for various committees to ask for their input (Planning and Board of Selectman)
    - Educating homeowners on their properties and preservation
    - Making historical archives digitized from the historic society and Unitarian Church
    - Reach out to local colleges for historic preservation
    - A list of properties that could possibly be torn down and how to preserve them (homes at risk).
- Cemeteries
  - No update
- Expanding the historic District – We will continue working on this project and possibly updating the bylaw.
  - We need to have a formal study committee.
  - Leslie made a motion to create a formal study committee for the meeting house historic district and seconded by Amy. It passed unanimously.
- Amy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25. This was seconded by Leslie. It passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Stockman  
Secretary