

Stratham Heritage Commission

Minutes of the Meeting

Weds., 9 April 2014

OPENING:

Present: Becky Mitchell, chair; Nancy L. Hansen, tonight's secretary and alternate member; Flossie Wiggin, alternate member; Nate Merrill, treasurer; M.J. Werner, Planning Board rep; guests, Tammy Hathaway and Matt Gunn.

Meeting: Opened by the chair at 7:04pm; adjourned at 8:55pm.

Minutes: March 12, 2014, meeting minutes were approved (motion Merrill, second Wiggin); January 8, 2014, minutes for joint meeting with the Conservation Commission were approved (motion Merrill, second Mitchell).

Treasurer's Report: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Heritage Preservation Fund: Warrant article was presented by chair Mitchell at Town Meeting and approved on a strong voice vote for \$50,000.

Bartlett-Cushman House: 1. Lisa Mausolf is moving forward with the nomination for the National Register; next review by the State Historical Resources Council is in July, and following the Council's approval the National Park Service has 45 days to respond. 2. B Mitchell reports that the HC payment to Mausolf is expected to be under budget. 3. The roof shingles need to be replaced (roof leaks), so the HC should begin to get estimates (no assignment made). There is \$16,000 in the town budget for repairs and maintenance; the chair will discuss roof and funding with D Canada, selectman. 4. After completion of the National Register process the Town will pursue the RFP for finding a partner in the rehabilitation for reuse process.

Regional HC Meeting (Sat 12 April 2014 – Morgera Room, Fire House): The Stratham HC will host; Maggie Stier of the NH Preservation Alliance will speak on the role of HCs; approximately 20 attendees are expected.

Planning Board: 1. MJ Werner, PB rep to HC, reported that the Town is updating the Master Plan again; details to follow. 2. B Mitchell reported on a recent PB/ZBA joint meeting to consider an Application for Conditional Use Permit, Special Exception, and Site Plan Review for a proposed telecommunications tower to be located at 313 Portsmouth Avenue (Stratham Hill Stone property).

The application was brought by Varsity Wireless with a National Environmental Policy Act Screening Report prepared by EBI Consulting.

Summary issues: No communication with the Stratham HC from EBI Consulting, Varsity Wireless, or town planning department; inadequate photographic evidence and historic resources reconnaissance field review in EBI report; apparent failure to notify all abutters; and Stratham's failure to respond

to EBI's letter seeking input regarding any historical resources located within the area of impact..

Motion: N Hansen, second N Merrill, no further discussion; approved unanimously:

Motion that Chairman Mitchell will send two letters explaining our concerns about the proposed telecommunications tower at 313 Portsmouth Avenue, as well as our concerns about continuing communication failures between the Planning Department and Heritage Commission

Letter #1: To the Board of Selectmen: The HC was not notified by the Town Planning Department that a telecommunications tower project was anticipated for an area in close proximity to Stratham Hill Park and other historical resources; and the Town Planner apparently failed to respond to the communication from EBI consulting on 22 July 2013 regarding historic resources within the project's area of impact.

Letter #2: To Planning Board chairman Mike Houghton: The HC strongly objects to the currently-proposed standard monopole tower with external antennae due to its adverse visual impact on surrounding historic properties; a modification to the plan is essential to minimize the visual effects of the intended tower and to preserve the historic nature of the area. The HC requests the PB to demand that Varsity Wireless –or any future contractor--erect a stealth monopole (with no exterior antennas).

NEW BUSINESS:

Membership: Georgiana Law submitted resignation to the Selectmen; Tammy Hathaway submitted application for membership. Both are pending.

HC Goals for 2014: **All attending members of the HC and those not present at this meeting are requested to think about the most important goals for 2014 and email them to the chair for discussion at the May meeting.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting, MJ Werner, all seconded and approved. Meeting adjourned 8:55pm.

These minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy L. Hansen

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 1