

MINUTES OF THE UPTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION
May 1, 2012

Chairman Barbara Burke, Jonathan Meagher, Cathy Taylor, Jerry Owczarzak, Joyce Heywood and George Patterson were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm in the basement of the police station.

Millhaus Apartments Application for Tax Credit

Barbara passed around a letter from the ownership of the Millhaus Apartments regarding the current exterior work. Millhaus had applied for a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Tax Credit for the work to the property, which is the site of the historic Knowlton Hat Factory. Brona Simon of the Mass. Historical Commission sent the Millhaus consultants a letter dated March 22, 2012 denying the application for the tax credit on the grounds that proposed faux slate (Lamarite) replacement shingles were not in keeping with the significant historic character of the old factory building's mansard roof.

The representative from Overlook Associates of Salem, MA (the company that owns Millhaus Apartments), Elaine B. Finbury, sent a letter disputing Ms. Simon's grounds for rejecting the tax credit application dated April 11, 2012. Ms. Finbury's letter notes that similar Lamarite shingles were used in the restoration of the exceptionally prominent roof of the historic Old Salem Jail with the approval of MHC.

Jon asked what the Millhaus Apartments team wants from the Commission. Barbara said that it was unclear to her what they wanted. Barbara told Ms. Finbury that she would call her after she discussed the issue with the Commission. Cathy noted that it was a bit presumptuous of the Millhaus consultant to assume that the materials being used on the roof of the building would be approved by the MHC. Joyce noted that she and Barbara had met with the Millhaus team and seen the shingles in question. She recalled that the Overlook people had told she and Barbara that the shingles in question had "been approved" by the state. Joyce also noted that there is not much that the Commission can do to influence MHC at this point.

The Commission wrote a letter supporting Overlook's renovation plan for Millhaus after Joyce and Barbara viewed the Lamarite material at their meeting with Overlook.

Barbara will call Overlook to see exactly what they want from the Commission.

Men's Club

Barbara described a recent discussion that she had with the new president of the Upton Men's Club, Brad Didio. They will be meeting tonight and taking action on the previous requests that the Historical Commission has made for the Upton Men's Club's assistance with work at Heritage Park. Barbara has particularly asked for a donation to the fencing that was put up along the left side of the park property after the Men's Club had suggested that they were willing to make a donation to cover its cost.

Treasurer's Report

Jerry reported that the Expense account remains unchanged from the last meeting. The Gift Account stands at \$3024.65.

Town Hall Renovation

Barbara reported that the Capital Budget Committee voted unanimously against the plan, supported by the Commission, for the renovation of Upton Town Hall. The Capital Budget Committee would prefer a new town hall to be built on land leased by Maplewood Cemetery next to the railroad tracks on Maple Ave. in West Upton. Barbara urged the members of the Commission to attend the annual town meeting on Thursday, May 10 to vote on the Town Hall Renovation Committee's plan.

New Business: Heritage Park and Pratt Hill (Cathy)

Cathy has looked into what needs to be done to apply for the discontinuous National Register District for Pratt Hill and Heritage Park. Barbara suggested that we will need to know what the Narragansett Indians (who own the property holding the stone cairns on Pratt Hill) are doing on their end before we look into doing anything ourselves.

Jerry and Jon both noted that they were unsure of the criteria for a discontinuous National Register District. The rest of the Commission was also unsure of the official basis upon which such a district would be recognized. Barbara will talk to Doug Harris of the Narragansetts and Paul Loether of the National Register about clarifying the situation.

Barbara suggested that members of the Commission should meet with Cissy Henderson soon to discuss plantings at the park.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

