

Lenox Historical Commission meeting via Zoom, Aug 20, 2020

Present:

Olga Weiss, Cindy Weiss, Lucy Kennedy, Jan Chague, Pat Jaouen. Guest: Gwen Miller, land use director

1. Minutes of June 18 as amended: accepted. Minutes of July 9: accepted.
2. Marissa Marvelli inventory: Neil is finishing the survey and the consultants are planning to deliver the report this week. Jan has a question about an East Street property's date, but suggests we make a list of all questions when we get the full report. Lucy will send us the spread sheet.
3. National Register: Olga has received a communication from Betsy Frieberg? At the Mass. Historical Commission. She is sorry the process has taken so long. MHC has been anticipating the concerns of the NPS and is reviewing what Neil submitted at the end of July. MHC is doing its best to finalize the nomination and will send it back to us for review. Betsy reminds us that Neil declined to do another full revision. She expects to have something for us in Sept. or Oct.
4. Alternatives to PermitEyes: Lucy notes that the alternative is for the building inspector or staff to be on the lookout and alert us of any demolitions. 41 Tucker St. got a ZBA approval but did not get a demolition permit. Another one upcoming: 51 Willowcreek Road is going to the ZBA but should also go through the permit process. It was built in 1920. Others, for watch list: 51 and 57 Housatonic St. – possible use as affordable housing? (Gwen joins the meeting.) It sounds like 41 Tucker did not file for a demo permit. Usually the ZBA informs applicants they need to go for all applicable permits. Gwen will remind the ZBA. Lucy has written form letters for Gwen that will inform applicants of the process. Olga asks about strengthening the law to make it similar to Stockbridge's. Gwen says any amendment will require a town meeting vote.
5. Updates: Gwen says the Winstanly property is still tied up in a lawsuit and may get remanded to the ZBA. Blantyre: Olga questions how the Great Estates bylaw is being followed. She suggests writing a letter to the ZBA about the questions. Gwen will talk to BJ, building inspector, about 51 and 57 Housatonic.
6. Olga would like to mount a campaign to remove or modify the Dover Amendment. Gwen says the Planning Board is reviewing our nonprofit and religious use language. She may propose a new bylaw for Town Meeting. Lucy posted a picture of the Cozynook demolition on Facebook and had 60 comments about it, many negative. Gwen notes that the new Cozynook owners got a permit before the demolition delay bylaw was in effect. Olga would like to see more support from the town in cases like this. Lucy will follow up with Pam Kueber at the Planning Board.
7. East Street School: No follow-up. Questions are raised about why Eastover is not included in the Great Estates bylaw.
8. Historic building plaques are still needed for Birchwood Inn and others. Birchwood may not do this because of questions about the date of the building. Lucy will follow up with Osceola.

9. Lucy listened to a Mass. Preservation meeting about a loan program in Arlington, a preservation fund. Arlington got a community block development grant for historic preservation loans. These can be for a relatively minor amount and are managed through a bank. (Pat Jaouen joins the meeting.)
10. Assignments: Lucy will send around the spreadsheet from the consultants, will await feedback on the letters re: demolition delay, and Lucy and Olga will follow up with Pam K. about the new Planning Board proposal and whether we can add Eastover to the Great Estates bylaw. Lucy will also follow up with a plaque for Osceola and will look for the owners of 51 and 57 Housatonic. Jan will look into the East Street School. Cindy will look up the names of the Stockbridge historical preservation people who might be invited to a future meeting. Olga will follow up re: sign makers for the cemetery sign and will have Kate re-send the prototypes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Next meeting: Sept. 10 at 3 p.m. outside at the Lilac Park gazebo with the alternative of a Zoom meeting.