

Medfield Historical Commission

March 2, 2021 Meeting

Minutes

Members present: co-chair David Temple; Maria Baler; co-chair Seth Meehan; Joe Opiela

Staff present: Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Others present and participating: Peter Fletcher; Greg Guerra; Christine McCue Potts; Michael Moylan; Kirstin Poler; John Thompson; Todd Trehubenko

7:35 pm – Meehan called the meeting to order and read the following notice:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Medfield Historical Commission is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the instructions on the agenda and meeting notice. This meeting is being recorded.

Commission update

Raposa explained that it is her understanding as the commission had four members that all members would have to be present for a quorum and that all votes would have to be unanimous to carry.

Minutes (2/10/21)

Meehan and Temple commended Baler, Opiela, and Tracy Hogan for collaborating on such detailed minutes for the February 10 meeting. The members unanimously approved the minutes as amended.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Meehan explained the town's demolition delay bylaw. First, the commission members consider if the structure to be demolish has historical significance as defined in the bylaw – is it significantly associated with historic persons or events, and does it have importance in terms of its period, style, architect, builder, etc.? If they vote that the structure does have historical significance, the members then consider if the structure if preferably preserved, i.e., would its demolition be detrimental to the town? A positive second vote imposes an 18-month delay on the demolition, though the members can vote to lift the delay if certain conditions are met.

7:45 pm – Review of Demolition Permits

18 Pound Street – Members considered the permit to demolish the free-standing garage at 18 Pound Street. Greg Guerra, the owner and applicant, was present. All members viewed the structure individually before the meeting. Guerra explained the poor condition of the garage as well as its unknown construction date. No comment was received by the public. On a motion by Temple and a

second by Baler, the members voted unanimously that the building did not have historical significance, allowing its demolition as requested in the permit. Temple will notify the building commissioner of the decision.

78 Harding Street – Members considered the permit to demolish the home at 78 Harding Street, first built in 1857 with subsequent additions. Michael Moylan, the owner and applicant, was present. Moylan had accompanied all members on a site visit on February 27. Moylan explained the poor condition of the home as well as his intention to use elements of the existing home (such as floorboards) in the new, single-family home he hoped to construct on the same location. In response to Fletcher's question, Moylan explained he had not investigated lifting the house to rehabilitate the foundation. Moylan expressed concern that parts of the original home would not meet current code. The members reviewed the building's Form B from the MCRIS database (with the recommendation that the building be listed in the National Register of Historic Places) and its reference in the town's historic preservation plan of 1999. McCue Potts spoke to the building's significance to town history. On a motion by Opiela and a second by Baler, the members voted unanimously that the building was of historical significance. Baler commented that the home had architectural significance within the context of the Harding Street neighborhood. She recognized that the additions are in poor condition. On a motion by Opiela and a second by Temple, the members voted unanimously that the building be preferably preserved, delaying its demolition for 18 months. Moylan asked what kind of work would be permitted to the house, given its poor condition. Thompson suggested he consult the preservation guidelines from the National Park Service. Baler said the question is best answered by the building commissioner. The commission members encouraged Moylan to return with further information about the feasibility of saving the main part of the house. Temple will notify the building commissioner of the decision.

Scenic Roads

McCue Potts provided an update on the scenic-roads survey sent to members of the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, and Planning Board. There were 14 responses to the survey, and the ranking of the selected streets was: Elm St., Farm St., Plain St., Nebo St., and Millbrook Rd. Meehan explained the position of the Planning Board was to move forward with an article with all five streets but to withhold a formal vote in support until there was more public input and a draft of the article. Raposa explained that elements of a submitted warrant article can be removed but not added, so the scenic parameters of the roads could be reduced before town meeting. McCue Potts and Raposa will contact residents on the proposed streets and invite them to a joint meeting of the three commissions/boards on April 5. Members took no vote on the article.

State Hospital RFP

In advance as requested by the town administrators, all members reviewed the drafted request for proposals of the State Hospital. Trehubenko, chair of the development committee, provided an update on the draft and welcomed comments. Members praised the RFP's emphasis on preserving the site's buildings and campus and hoped the committee would consider that emphasis when reviewing the proposals received. Trehubenko explained the commission members would have a role in reviewing any proposed demolition in the future. Thompson suggested two changes to the RFP: removing the reference that development of the North Field is not encouraged (not wanting it

to appear as a 'carrot' to developers) and adding that a developer would incur expenses for an expert review of any proposed demolition. Trehubenko responded that the first reference was part of the original MOU and is requested by the selectmen. Any agreement over expenses would be part of an agreement with a developer instead of appearing in an RFP.

Townwide Master Plan

Meehan stated that members of the master plan committee would like to present the plan's implementation strategies to the commission for feedback. The members voted unanimously to invite the presentation at the commission's next meeting. No comment was received by the public.

Membership applications/outreach

Temple identified Fletcher, Poler, and Doug Whitla as candidates for the commission. McCue Potts offered to help the commission with research but not as a formal member. After a discussion of the candidates and their backgrounds and on a motion by Opiela and a second by Temple, the members voted unanimously to recommend to the Selectmen that they appoint Fletcher, Poler, and Whitla to the commission at their March 16 meeting. Temple will submit the letter of recommendation.

Adjournment

At 9:52 pm, the members voted unanimously to adjourn.