

US

Approved 4-10-24

Winchendon Historic Commission

Minutes
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Via Remote Participation

Members Present: James McCrohon, Mary Harrington, Jenelle Sroczynski, Yvonne Harrington

Members Absent: Guy Corbosiero

Others Present:

Meeting called to order: 4:01p.m.

Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes of the February 14 2024 regular meeting with edits, Sroczynski/Y. Harrington 4-0 Approved by roll call vote @ 4:11 pm.

Announcements: Chairwoman Harrington spoke to the format as the monthly agenda. She keeps it "boiler plate" as it remains pliable and she is hoping it works for members. Members agree the format is fine. Ms. Harrington told the Commission she has submitted the annual report to Deb Dennis, Administrative Assistant in the Town Manager's office and it will be included in the Town's Annual Report presented at Town Meeting in May. Ms. Harrington has presented a draft plan of goals for members to review. She is interested in achieving the following:

1. Seek grants to fund part-time HC administrator position.
2. Accomplish baseline, short/medium term historical commission activities to preserve and promote historical and cultural assets, in line with master plan, including:
 - A. Annual report
 - B. Reconnaissance report
 - C. Certificates of appropriateness, non-applicability and hardship.
 - See. Oversee historic districts.
 - D. Review demo permits for structures 50+ year
 - E. Member, Public training.
3. Build Town Hall presence
 - A. Coordinate with selectman, town manager and department heads including building commissioner, DPW, conservation board, planning board.
 - B. Maintain availability to public to answer questions, assist and educate

C. Contribute to projects on historically significant structures, including but not limited to Old Murdock, Townhall, etc

4. Event participation

A. Fall festival.

B. Reenactment.

C. Other events as approved by board commission in annual plan. The Commission will regroup next month to review.

Chairwoman Harrington is researching information on the length of service of former members and finalizing gift choices. Ms. Harrington will confirm contact/email information with Deb Dennis and Don O'Neil. Lastly, Ms. Harrington told members there is a seat available at a training session in Paxton, tonight at 6pm.

Member Comments:

The Commission is interested in cleaning up the Old Centre Cemetery. Ms. Sroczynski stated she will reach out to Ms. Amy Scott and inquire if there is an event planned, as Ms. Scott has hosted stone cleaning events previously. Ms. Sroczynski will also ask Ms. Scott if she would be interested in becoming an alternate member. Ms. Y. Harrington would like to see a bigger social media presence for the Commission. Mr. McCrohon has continued his work on researching financial incentives for owners of Historic homes. He is specifically interested in the following Winchendon homes:

193 Front Street, The Dr. Alvah Godding House

14-16 School Square, The William Beaman House

5-7 Schhol Street, The William Whitney House

Mr. McCrohon presented the following information on the forgivable loan program: Historical Commissions play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the historical character of a community. To help residents obtain forgivable loans for historic restoration, historical commissions can take several proactive steps:

- 1) Develop partnerships with local and state agencies, preservation organizations and financial institutions that can help fund forgivable loans for historic restoration
- 2) Educate residents by providing educational workshops and resources to inform residents about available forgivable loan programs for historic restoration. Explain eligibility criteria, application processes and the benefits of preserving historic properties.
- 3) Create a resource guide to develop a comprehensive outline of forgivable loan programs, grants, and tax incentives for historic restoration. Make this guide readily accessible to residents through historical commission's website or local offices.
- 4) Advocate for funding for historic preservation initiatives at the local and state levels. Engage with policy makers, attend public hearings, and make a case for the economical, cultural, and community benefits of preserving historic properties.
- 5)) Work with financial institutions to establish relationships with local banks, credit unions, and any other financial institution to encourage them to offer forgivable loans specifically tailored to historic restoration. Encourage these institutions to consider the unique challenges and opportunities associated with preserving historic structures.
- 6) Offer technical assistance in preparing applications for forgivable loans. Offer guidance for project planning by making sure that restoration plans align with preservation standards.
- 7) Advocate for local bylaws to support historic preservation including those that

- incentivize or require the use of forgivable loans for restoration projects.
- 8) Showcase success stories in the community. Share the success stories through newsletters, websites of public events in order to inspire other residents and demonstrate the positive impact of the forgivable loans.
 - 9) Networking events bring together property owners, professionals in different areas of historic preservation, lenders and other stakeholders. These events can facilitate connections and provide a platform for discussion financing options.
 - 10) Stay informed about changes in the state and federal historic preservation programs and funding sources. That way residents can be guided toward the most current and relevant opportunities.

The effectiveness of these efforts depends on the local context and the willingness of the various stakeholders to collaborate. The approach needs to be tailored to the specific needs and opportunities within our community. Mr. McCrohon has also reached out to Nicole Roberts, Planning Coordinator for the Town of Winchendon regarding grant opportunities. He will keep in contact with her, and wrote a thank you note to her for her help. This will be an ongoing project for the Commssion.

Public Comments:

None were heard.

Old Business:

No updates

Next scheduled meeting-Scheduled for April 10, 2024 at 4pm.

Adjournment: *Motion to adjourn McCrohon/ Sroczynski, 4-0 Approved by roll call vote @ 5:13pm.*

Meeting Adjourned at 5:13pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jenelle Sroczynski
Board Secretary

Minutes Approved By:
