

Sep 25 2023 8:25 am

Fitchburg Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes for the Fitchburg Historical Commission Hybrid Meeting on July 27, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.

Members Present: Keith Chenot, Don Ostrowski, Ellen DiGeronimo, Charles Sternaimolo, and Andrew Lipasti

Members Absent: none

Meeting Guests: none

Chair Keith Chenot called the meeting to order at 3:03pm and noted a quorum was present.

1. Public comment period: None

2. Review and approve minutes of the June 29, 2023, meeting:

Keith noted one edit in the minutes. Ellen made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Don. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.

3. Update of Monument Park repairs:

Keith noted having a phone call with Mayor DiNatale and discussed a quote for eight benches for Monument Park. The quote was from a previous city used company. He also talked with the Mayor about park repairs including the entry steps, the monument itself, and the monument base. Keith also plans to talk with the Park Dept. regarding the benches and other repair work. We need to find a source to make the molds for the cast iron railings.

Charles noted the Clara Barton memorial bricks in the park need to be replaced or leveled. We may ask the Parks Dept. for help with this item.

4. Update on historic building demolition delay:

We discussed Don's Demolition Delay Resource Book which contains some good information on other Massachusetts cities and towns that have demolition delay bylaws or ordinances. Keith noted some comments on the Book and suggested adding the text "Draft" and "Fitchburg, MA" to it. There are 14 Gateway Cities which have ordinances including Leominster.

We discussed our Commission group and a lack of staff for doing the Demolition Delay process which would include public hearings and paperwork.

Keith will check with Building Commissioner Mark Barbadoro to see if he can attend our next meeting in August to discuss this demolition delay ordinance. He also noted that the *Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs* issued by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) has good notes and language regarding demolition delay and preservation of our city's future. As an example: "Preserving our past for our future."

Andy mentioned trying to get letters of support for the ordinance, and he will check with Dorothy Rouleau and the Historical Society. Rouleau had written a letter of congratulations to Leominster after they passed their ordinance.

5. Update on appreciation and preservation of historic stone walls and structures:

Don noted there are no updates on the stone wall ordinance. We discussed doing a separate Resource Book for this ordinance.

6. Update on Historic Districts information brochure/map information guide, signage, web posting:

Keith noted this information guide is getting final draft updates and the addition of QR codes for the online access to more information. He has sent out a draft version of the brochure for us to review. The FSU group will be working on making and checking the QR codes.

7. Historic Marker update:

We have a new historic marker for the owner of the Drury Building being processed and ready to go to the sign maker. A marker is also in process for the historic second meeting house or Debonis Building.

Andy noted distributing the brochures at the Historical Society and City Hall, and plans to bring brochures to the Library and the Chamber of Commerce.

8. Project to document and share Main Street building histories, historic districts, tax credit, and other restoration/reuse incentives:

Ellen is working on this item which is a work in process. She notes having a good map of the area from the Engineering Dept.

9. Commission membership vacancies update:

We are looking for nominations for the two Commission vacancies. There is no realtor candidate yet, and Ellen is looking for an attorney candidate.

10. FHC website additions: Links to architectural styles, NPS Preservation Briefs, etc.:

Keith discussed adding additional items and information to the Historical Commission website such as historic districts, architectural styles, and building histories with photos. We could include a link to the National Park Service with information for fixing old historical buildings.

Don noted we could add information to our Resource Books including ways buildings could be preserved versus demolished, and this could save costs and save historical features. Keith added that we need to add our Resource Books to the website, and add our website name to our agendas and minutes.

11. New business:

Keith mentioned the topic of National Historical Preservation and that it has some good talking points.

12. Next meeting:

Historical Commission Meeting: August 31, 2023, 3:00 PM, City Hall Room 101A and Zoom hybrid.

13. Adjournment:

Ellen made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Charles. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:07pm.

Submitted by Andrew Lipasti, Secretary, Fitchburg Historical Commission