

Community Preservation Committee Minutes

Date: March 24, 2021

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Didi Chadran, Beth Williams, Fran Nickerson, John Lee, Michelle Catalina, Doug Thornton, Stacia Donahoe, Jo Ward

Absent: Pam Marston

Guests: Manny Lindo-Harvard Historical Commission,

Meeting was convened at 7:31 pm.

1. Roll Call, Sound Check were done. Preamble, Rules for Participation, and Reminder that meeting materials are available online and that this meeting is being recorded were read by Didi Chadran.
2. Public Comment Period: None
3. Review Minutes from 2/10/2021 Meeting – Minutes approved as written.
4. Treasurer's Report: \$89,270.40 balance after all voted FY22 Requests.
5. Harvard Historical Commission: Shaker Herb House Restoration Initiative
 - a. Presentation from Manny Lindo, Harvard Historical Commission: An Independent Study of the Harvard Shaker Herb House was done inhouse by HHC members & high school students, with technical and historical contributions made by Robert Adam. This study was completed in January and looked at 3 areas: 1) Exterior envelope conditions, required repairs and estimated cost (approximately \$48,000), 2) Interior conditions, required repairs and estimated cost (approximately \$68,000), and 3) Options for building reuse. Herb House owned by the Town. Assigned to Harvard Historic Commission for care & feeding. HHC put together grant application for the State, which requires matching funds. 36 applications submitted to State. 50/50 shot for funding. CPC is avenue for matching funds. Too late for annual Town meeting. Discussion whether allowable under State Law. Manny was asked to submit application towards either Fall Town Meeting or Spring Town meeting 2022. Total amount requested from CPC is approximately \$56,000. Michelle asked for 5-year plan from Historic Commission, What's going to be the future of this building? Consideration of application (when filed) and funding is to be brought up at a future meeting. Didi will contact Stu Sklar to ask that the Select Board bring this under their review.

- b. Letter submitted to the Harvard Historical Commission by Shaker Village Historic District Resident, Marc Sevigny – Didi read the February 10, 2021 letter into the minutes.

“Harvard Historical Commission
13 Ayer Road
Harvard, MA 01451

Dear Commission,

We have lived in the Harvard Shaker Village Historic District for more than 20 years and have a strong interest in its protection and preservation. We recently had the opportunity to review the proposal to perform some repairs and changes to the exterior of the building and grounds, add electrical service, lighting, alarm systems, undertake a lead abatement project, and to make significant changes to the interior.

Some of the repairs are well grounded in preserving the building’s envelope and protecting against ongoing deterioration, and are worthy of pursuit. A large scope of the project addresses electrical service to the building and interior changes and very expensive lead abatement which seems premature without a defined use for the interior of the building.

Three of the four options for using the interior of the building are highly unlikely to ever come to pass for reasons that include lack of a septic system (and no probability of installing one in the wetland), lack of accessibility, lack of parking, and its location behind a private residence.

A mere 20% of the budget accounts for needed repairs. Of those repairs proposed, the suggestions are to replace “partially damaged” doors, sills and trim for “partially rotted” components. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the treatment of historical properties are not followed in these recommendations. Principally, the goal is to never replace original material when a repair is possible. Similarly, the mortar repointing requires analysis of the mortar (never use portland cement, which most masons would opt for), and the appropriate lime mortar mix ratio appropriate for the situation.

The principal reaction to the proposal is a “cart before the horse” nature of this proposal. It suggests many changes without knowing if they are required for the future use of the building. It is better to make no changes, other than protecting the existing elements, than to make changes that are not reversible, damage original features, and use financial resources that could best be directed at future protection of the building. I believe the best option for use of the building is to continue to maintain the envelope and to “do no harm”.

Please review the section below containing comments from the proposal.
I'd be happy to discuss these comments and concerns at any time.

Sincerely,

Marc Seigny"

6. Recap of Meetings with Select Board and Finance Committee: John Lee presented the proposed funding for CPC grants to the Select Board. There were no questions from Board. Never heard back from Finance Committee as to CPC presenting to them.
 7. Other Business
 - a. Didi shared annual reports information from Community Coalition Website. Didi will send out to Committee for review prior to submitting to Town Hall.
 - b. Michelle Catalina will not be re-upping for CPC after her term ends in June. Fran Nickerson will be stepping down from Planning Board and MAHT in June. Doug Thornton will be stepping down from Park & Rec.
 8. Action Items:
 - a. Didi to ask Stu Sklar about plans for a Fall Town Meeting.
 - b. Didi to inform Stu Sklar (Select Board) that we plan to open up a window for CPC grant applications.
 - c. Didi to inquire as to what is the disposition of the Select Board toward supporting Historical Commission's initiative towards the Shaker Herb Shed.
 9. Adjourned at 9:04pm.
- Next CPC Meeting – April 28, 2021
- Town Meeting – May 15, 2021