

HARVARD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 AYER ROAD • HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS 01451



The Harvard Historical Commission is chartered "...to preserve and protect the historic assets of Harvard, its buildings, structures, places, sites, and surrounding settings of historical or architectural significance."

Those wishing to record any or all of the meeting must alert the chair prior to the start of the meeting and the chair will make an announcement, in accordance with The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Following are the **minutes** of the regular meeting and public hearing of the Harvard Historical Commission, held via Zoom, on **June 1, 2022 at 7 pm.**

Submitted by Richard Cabelus, Secretary.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

George Triantaris (Chair)
Pam Marston (Vice Chair) *intermittently disconnected by Zoom
Richard Cabelus (Secretary)
Emanuel Lindo
Steve Nigzus
Brandon Loughery
Matthew McRae

MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA:

None

AUDIENCE:

TOPICS:

CALL TO ORDER:

7:00 pm

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

Minutes of the May 4, 2022 were approved by unanimous vote. Richard will correct a few typos.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. George has received no updates on light fixture, will leave that until that happens.

ONGOING APPLICATIONS:

1. None.

NEW APPLICATIONS:

1. None. Matt has not heard anything from Sandra. He reached out to her via email and offered to walk

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through the project with her. Sandra may be waiting on more information from architect. Matt will reach out again this week.

OFFICER ELECTIONS:

1. George asked if there were any changes to be made to the slate. Brandon made a motion to preserve the current slate of roles as stated. Pam seconded. Unanimous vote.
2. Brandon's last meeting. Taking time away. Someone has volunteered to step in for Brandon. George will hold an initial meeting with that person. George asked anyone knows someone who might be interested in joining the commission, to please bring their names forward. We have a possible member and two alternates.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

1. Barn

George has not heard anything further on that.

2. Thoughts on public meeting

George was a little disappointed on how it turned out. Motion on the provision in CPC funding did not pass. Two contradictory public opinions swayed the opinions of people there. Less than 4 percent of the town's voters were present at the meeting, so the decision was made by a very few people who were swayed by some uninformed opinions expressed. Deeply sorry due to work Mannie had done over the years to get to this point.

Mannie said sometimes you have to go with the wisdom of the voter. Notified the Massachusetts Historical that it didn't pass, who said we won't get a grant, but will send a notification letter. Indicated that would've gotten a grant.

Mannie noticed one of doors at town meeting was unlocked. He secured all doors and windows in building.

Mannie noticed the brickwork on the chimney, on the interior lower portion of the building, rapidly decaying. Does post a potential risk to the stability of the chimney. No money to do anything now, but might be important to take care of it in the future. Two options: First option: Send a letter to the Select Board expressing that we think the building needs repair and maintenance. We've failed to raise the necessary funding to support it. Request the Select Board develop a plan to deal with the short-term maintenance and long-term preservation. Harvard Historical Commission will discontinue any further efforts on trying to make any repairs to building. Second option: We could request the Select Board go to the Permanent Building Commission and ask them to review the present plans and specifications on the project, with the objective of having the Permanent Building Committee decide the appropriateness of the present design in restoring the structure and the long-term preservation of the building, provide their recommendations for any changes they think are appropriate for the plans and specifications, and ultimately provide an independent cost estimate. This option would give the Select Board an opportunity to perhaps pursue a project coming out of where we are. Third option: Do nothing. But if we sent letter to Select Board, a much cleaner way of HHC getting out of present responsibility for the building.

George noted that at the meeting that the Preservation person, Robert Adam, from North Bennet School, was involved with this building. Mannie talked to Robert. In early part of study, Robert volunteered to give us a

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morning, come out, look at the building, walk around and give his opinion on building. Really surprised when revealed Robert Adam found nothing wrong with building and thought to leave it alone. Robert had spent morning with them. Didn't ask Robert to be on team because no money to pay him. Wishes they would've sent email from Robert to HHC.

George noted that one of objectors at meeting worked on Garrison House. He agreed with Mannie's first suggested option. He would hand it off.

Pam said that Community Preservation is very much in favor of another application from HHC. Whether they're in favor of preserving or restoring building needs to be determined. Several neighbors will be unhappy with possibility building might be used. CPC said they'd vote for funds for this project, for some sort of preservation. If HHC has to start from the beginning, that's one thing, but CPC seemed very positive about whole thing. Pam thought this was good. CPC thought old buildings need to be preserved whether or not they are being used.

George only recommended going forward only if we have money or if some other preservationist willing to come in and give an assessment.

Mannie said Permanent Building Committee has an architect, contractor, and engineer on board. Could draft a letter that asks them, asks Select Board to go to the Permanent Building Committee and include the opinion of a preservationist. He thinks it would give more veracity to the effort if it gets outside the HHC at this point. He'll go with the group as to what is done.

George said it's up to Mannie.

Mannie's preference was to get opinions of the rest of the Commission in how HHC wants to go forward.

Pam thought to pursue building. At CPC, happened to drive by an old school building in Groton, near Route 119. Bigger than Herb House. Has a sign saying what it used to be. At some point, Historical Commission restored building. Nobody uses it. Similar situation to what we have here.

Richard thought we should hand it off to the Select Board. Write up a summation of the condition of the property, what our recommendations are, and hand it off to them. If SB does nothing, we can revisit the issue.

Matt supported Mannie's first option of handing it over to the Select Board.

Steve thought we should hand it over to the Select Board, but thinks they will just push it back to HHC.

George and Pam said they're more likely to drop it.

Brandon wondered if there's any clause or mandates to provoke or nudge a behavior change. Thought it was sad the town continues to procure properties and hold them without maintaining them. Brings up revenue model of old library, given its \$1,000,000 roof. Thought that we're setting a precedent for town to take over properties only to deteriorate them. Can anything be done for town not taking care of building? Otherwise, need to figure out a way to urge town to sell it to private hands or do something else that would give it a viable option.

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Matt saw town didn't want responsibility of property. Ended up with 30 apartment buildings. In a way, sees that it's good that the town just doesn't sell them off.

George brought up other option of selling them with restrictions on them that building has to be maintained and can't replace it.

Mannie thought with either option, we need to go through Select Board. We have a completed design package ready to go to contract. Only get 1 year to spend the grant money from the state.

George had nothing to add except to include, "Here's what we've found, basic things that need to be done to preserve the building. We strongly recommend you look at this and do as much as possible."

Brandon brought up possibly adding a clause of, if town no longer wants to be steward of property, recommend to envelope in Protective Demolition Delay or pursue some other route.

Mannie preferred to stick with his first option. Send it upstairs, unofficially, "What do you want from us?" Wait until end of summer, see if anything happens.

George thought HHC should go on record, letter, "We are turning over to you. Not within our purview. Here are our recommendations to preserve. Now this is in your court."

Mannie agreed with George. Will draft that package, send it out to community. At next meeting, do whatever wanted with it.

3. Bromfield House/Language on maps

George submitted our report to Jennifer Doherty at Massachusetts Historical Commission. Endorsed, now filed there. George sent copy to Planning Board. Richard put it on the agenda for Monday, he can present it. Would be helpful if Planning Board could endorse it, but don't need to approve it. Will have a public hearing in August or September, will have to prepare something for that. Pam said we need a warrant article.

Had talked at last meeting about what to do about changing the map with the language about the schools. Would try to do this in two reports, but at same meeting. George spoke with Jennifer about this. She raised some concerns. She has issue with map drawn through town and private parcels. Another issue with parcel in map, but specific building excluded from it. Jennifer strongly suggested either redrawing map with those parcels out of it or redraw map with parcels in it and the schools are covered. George did not believe we should link the project with Bromfield House to redrawing of map. Table the issue and approach the Select Board. Mannie agrees. Pam agreed. Steve agreed.

George thought we should "shop around" these issues before the town meetings. Can we get other commissions and boards to endorse it? Pam thinks maybe do promotion. Afghan refugees will be living in there. Want to make sure property is protected prior to them moving in. George says it will be protected either way.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:

1. Monument Committee (MM)

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None.

2. CPC (PM)

Didi Chadron resigned because he's moving out of Harvard. Looking for new members.

3. Transportation Advisory Committee (PM)

Have not met for a while. Chris Ryan has not been rehired. Pam hasn't met with him.

4. Planning Board (RC)

Bromfield House on agenda for Monday. Great if Pam's there. She can present that. Richard will talk about it as well.

5. Design Review Board (SN)

Has not met.

6. Devens Committee (RC)

Meeting tomorrow.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY:

None.

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:

July 6, 2022.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:43 p.m. by unanimous vote.