

# 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 a regular meeting of the Harvard Historical Commission, held via Zoom, on **Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 7 pm.**

Submitted by George Triantaris, Secretary.

## **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Pam Marston (Chair)  
Steve Nigzus (Vice Chair)  
George Triantaris (Secretary)  
Emanuel Lindo  
Richard Cabelus  
Brandon Loughery  
Matthew McRae

**MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA:** None

## **AUDIENCE:**

Alice Thayer, Lucas Thayer, Stephen Morris, Karen Levitt, Olivia Lindo, Nicholas Thornton, Don Dumont, Elizabeth Carmensia, and Staci Donahue (liaison to planning board).

## **TOPICS:**

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

**7:00 pm**

### **REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

The minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

### **ONGOING APPLICATION:**

#### **92 South Shaker Road – Alice Thayer - Fence**

Pam stated that the Thayers had proposed an alternate design for the fence at 92 South Shaker Road but had withdrawn their application via an email. Pam asked George to outline next steps. George reviewed the history of the application, public hearing, denial of the application, and the suggestion that the Thayers propose an alternate design for the fence. Although the Thayers did submit an alternate design they have now withdrawn the application. The commission is faced with a structure that is in violation of the bylaw. The proposed next step is to send a letter to the Thayers asking them to remove the existing structure within 30 days and urge them to submit a new application. The bylaw provides methods of enforcement. Richard endorsed this approach. Steve stated that he has spoken with the chair of the agricultural commission about another situation where a property owner claimed that the right to farm bylaw overruled zoning bylaws and the chair stated that this was not the case. Richard stated that he had had a conversation with the same chair about this application and agreed that the right to farm does not override the HHC's jurisdiction over a structure located in an historic district. There was a unanimous vote to send the Thayer's a letter asking them to remove the existing fence.

**NEW APPLICATIONS:** None

**NEW APPLICATIONS APPROVED:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

### **ON-GOING BUSINESS:**

1. Bromfield stonewall project – update (EL)

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Manny reported that the wall is complete except for closing a small opening that the Bromfield Trust wants closed.

## 2. Bromfield House discussion (MM)

Pam shared that meetings were going forward to explore options for Bromfield House. She presented a letter written by Beverly Dunlop Rodrigues stressing the importance of the structure. Matt stated that after the last meeting he felt he did not have enough information about the intentions of the commission to write a position paper. There was a discussion about possible uses for the building as well as a desire to preserve it. It was decided the HHC's role should be to put forward its opinion about whether the building is significant and whether it should be preserved. Possible uses for the building are many and range from selling it to a private owner, turning it into apartments, repurposing it as public housing or using it for some other town purpose. George stated that if the property is sold the town could impose restrictions on the deed so that it could not be torn down (as would likely occur) or create a stand-alone historic district for the structure (as has been done in other towns). If the sale of the property has to be approved at a town meeting the new district could be created at the same time. It was decided by unanimous vote that Matt should draft an official position for the HHC to submit to the committee would state that Bromfield House is a significant structure both in terms of its architecture and historic purpose (citing the guidelines in the draft demolition delay bylaw), and that the structure should be preserved in its current location.

## 3. HHC welcome packet for new homeowners – update (BL) Brochure (PM) and introduction letter to district residents (GT)

Brandon has updated the brochure for new homeowners and shared it with the commissioners. There was a request that a parallel version be prepared for homeowners who are not new the district but may not be familiar with the HHC. It was decided that these would be mailed to all residents in the districts. Brandon will prepare and print the brochures and Pam will mail them.

## 4. Historic Harvard Website (PM & BL)

Brandon has worked on the website (<https://historicharvard.wordpress.com/>) and removed dated documents and other information that belong on the official HHC website. He has inserted links to the HHC website for viewers wishing to access an application or other official information. Going forward the website will serve as a resource for historical information about specific properties and the development of the town and the HHC. Brandon will alert Judy Warner so that the HHS understands this approach.

## 5. Herb House (ML) (This item was reviewed after the minutes were approved)

Manny stated that the study report on the Shaker Herb House had been prepared by 3 adults and 3 Bromfield students. Olivia Lindo and Nick Thornton presented the findings of the report reviewing the history of the structure and recommendations for repairs to preserve it. The initial estimate for this work is @ \$116,000. Manny reviewed possible future uses of the structure. Commissioners thanked the students for their thorough work and efforts. There was a discussion about jurisdiction of the structure. Staci believes that the conservations commission has jurisdiction. Manny would like to ask for CPC funding for the project as well as apply for state grants. The state declined a previous application because they required a detailed report which this study provides. Brandon felt that the commission should act before the structure deteriorates further. It was decided that the commission will vote on whether to approve the study at the next meeting and then next steps will be decided. There is some time urgency to get in to the grant cycle.

## 6. Photo record of historic districts (GT) – next steps

George intends to photograph all the houses in the district over the winter months while the trees are bare. He asked for advice on how to track the houses in the district and it was decided to use the GIS map.

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Brandon will help to determine the best way to store the pictures so that they are accessible in the future. Brandon will also download the historic pictures from the Historic Harvard website.

## 7. Project currently on hold:

Demolition Delay (GT)

Town Center lighting and power lines (GT)

Harvard Narrative History – historical surveys 1993 and 1994 (GT)

Certificates of Appropriateness – upload historical records on website (GT)

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:**

**Monument Committee** (RC) – Richard will alert the HHC of any changes or updates

**CPC** (PM)

## **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:**

Don Dumont stated that he was disappointed with the HHC's handling of the Thayer's application for a fence. He stated that he had missed the public hearing but thought the Thayers should have been allowed to propose an alternate fence. George suggested that he review the minutes.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:** February 3, 2021

**MEETING ADJOURNED:**

**7:55 pm**

## **DOCUMENTS:**

Letter from Beverly Dunlap Rodrigues re Bromfield House

Email from Alice Thayer re 92 South Shaker Road