



Chelmsford Historical Commission (CHC)

Virtual Meeting, online due to Covid-19

July 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Deb Taverna-Chairman, Brian Stripp-Vice Chairman, Fred Merriam, Jeffrey Merrill, Will Arvidson, David Vigeant, Deidre Connolly-Planning Board Liaison

Ms. Taverna called the meeting to order, 7:32 PM

1. Meet Chelmsford's Building Commissioner- Jose Negrón(present)

Ms. Taverna welcomed Mr. Negrón to the meeting and thanked him for attending. Ms. Taverna explained the ways in which the Commission and Mr. Negrón's office work together and noted that the commission would like his input for the Demolition by Neglect by law. Mr. Stripp welcomed Mr. Negrón, noting the importance of working together to preserve Chelmsford's historic nature. Mr. Negrón noted that communication between the commission and his office was important and that in his three months on the job he has been learning all he can about the town and its workings. Mr. Negrón asked if there was some way that during the permitting process there would be an alert that would let them know that the property was over 75 years old. Ms. Taverna noted that there was a hard copy in the office, it was noted that often times the hard copy is overlooked and that an immediate alert online is more productive. Mr. Negrón explained that most of the permitting process is now done online, he will approach the town tech. area to see about this. Ms. Taverna also noted that she would speak to town tech. area as well. Ms. Taverna and the other commission members thanked Mr. Negrón for attending the meeting.

2. **Public Input:** None

3. **Pre-Demolition Requests:**

- a. 314 Dunstable Road- No representative present. Ms. Taverna noted that she had sent information to the owners that they needed to attend the meeting and produce an inventory. It was noted that the house has already been demolished. There was an issue with this as Ms. Taverna noted that Ms. Stanfield had signed off. Ms. Taverna noted that this was a mistake and that the owners had been informed of the process and did not follow through.

There was discussion as to what can be done, should fines be imposed. Mr. Stripp noted that unless we hold violators accountable the commission has no hold, however in this case where there was a signature, there would be no way to push the issue. Mr. Merrill noted that this was the reason that the Alert on the permitting step is important. Mr. Stripp noted that this was a case of misconception and that there needs to be some checks and balances and the process needs to be tightened up. Ms. Taverna noted that she would contact the owners and get more details.

- b. 65 Hunt Road- Nicholas and Amanda Imlach in attendance explained that they were no longer going to demolish the home but instead were adding an addition. Mr. Imlach offered to send over the plans, the commission would greatly appreciate that. He noted that the architect had tried to keep the design in historical perspective. Mr. Imlach noted that upon doing the research it was noted in the town records that the house was built in the 1920's when in fact it was the 1800's. Mr. Merriam noted that that area of Hunt Road has some wonderful history and it was nice that they would be keeping it historical. The Commission thanked Mr. and Mrs. Imlach and wished them luck in the rest of the process.

4. **House Signs, National Register Signs, District House Signs:**

Mr. Stripp noted that not much has changed and that 96 Middlesex Street was the only pending home.

5. **Budget:** Ms. Taverna noted that under salaries and the general fund they were over budget, but will have the numbers with the final budget from the town.

6. **Emails, Telephone Calls, Letters:**

- Ms. Taverna noted that the only emails were sent re: 314 Dunstable Road.

7. **Historic Preservation-What Can We Do**

Mr. Arvidson had sent the draft of the brochure for commission review. Ms. Taverna noted that it did look good. Mr. Stripp asked how the brochure would be made available. It was discussed that it could be handed to new owners and put online. Ms. Taverna asked how difficult it would be to put on line. Mr. Merriam noted that it was no problem and once the commission approved, he could post it in a few places with links to guide in the process of maintaining an historic property. Mr. Merrill asked about the materials suggested and what approval is needed by the commission for repairs of an historic home. Ms. Taverna noted that possibly there could be a tie in with the alert system in

permitting. Mr. Stripp noted there needs to be a checks and balances with the list of properties over 75 years old. Mr. Merriam also noted that the materials used should be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Merriam noted that on the draft brochure the address was no longer valid. Mr. Arvidson noted that he can update with the correct address. Ms. Taverna noted that she would get the correct address and fix the paragraph that states the commissions help. Send Mr. Arvidson any suggestions and the commission will put it on the agenda for next month and thanked Mr. Arvidson for his work on the brochure.

8. Review Demolition Delay Bylaw working Change

Ms. Taverna noted that the bylaw needed some work on the wording.

Discussion: how will building dept help, is there a place for health department, there needs to be 2 parts; how to help stop and what constitutes willful neglect, how to catch before. Mr. Merriam noted that he felt the current wording was sufficient, noting that any changes made to the by law would need to go to Town Counsel and then be approved at Town Meeting. Ms. Taverna noted that she would come up with new wording and send to Town Counsel. Mr. Stripp asked how would this be navigated; knock on door, by the town, how would it be enforced.

9. Town Tours

Mr. Merriam noted that he had offered to work on apps that would work with cell phones and GPS "geo-fenced". However, he has been working with photo shop and putting color to old photos and putting on social media for Then and Now Thursdays with great success. This format reaches many many more people than the few that would walk and tour. He has been posting them on 3 sites on Facebook, with many great comments coming through, it has led to working on a new book.

10. Approval of Minutes

- MOTION: Mr. Stripp moved to accept the June 8, 2021 minutes with corrections, seconded by Mr. Merriam and so voted.

11. Set Agenda for August 10, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Stripp moved to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mr. Merriam and so voted.

Ms. Taverna closed the meeting at 8:41 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy A. Metz, Clerk