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## Chelmsford Historical Commission (CHC)

Special Meeting July 26, 2021

### Meeting Minutes

TOWN OF  
CHELMSFORD  
PATRICIA E.  
DZURIS  
TOWN CLERK

**Members in Attendance:** Deb Taverna-Chairman, Fred Merriam, Linda Prescott, Jeffrey Merrill

Non- Members in attendance: David Guthrie, Bill Harvey

Ms. Taverna called the meeting to order, 7:31 PM

I. 314 Dunstable Road-

Ms. Taverna reported that the issue was, the house had been demolished before the proper paperwork and signatures were obtained. Ms. Taverna gave Mr. Guthrie a timeline of emails explaining the procedure of obtaining Historical Commission authorization for demolition of a structure over 75 years old. It was noted that a signature had been obtained from Town Hall by Colleen Stansfield. The Commission was unaware of this signature.

Mr. Guthrie explained that they were under the impression that the signature was approval and demolition took place. He noted that the person in his office had not been clear about the procedure.

Ms. Taverna noted again that she had sent the personal assistant the information and procedure on July 1, for the second time, well in advance of the demolition. It was also noted that the Building Inspector, Mr. Negron had not signed off on the application.

#### Discussion

Mr. Harvey asked to speak and was given the floor by Ms. Taverna. Mr. Harvey noted that he was not there to speak to Mr. Guthrie and had no issues with him. Mr. Harvey asked to have 2 questions and answers entered into the records.

1. Was there a pre-determination hearing held for 314 Dunstable Road demolition?  
Ms. Taverna's answer: No.
2. Was Colleen Stansfield authorized to sign for the Chelmsford Historical Commissions Chairperson, Ms. Taverna?  
Ms. Taverna's answer: No, she was not authorized to sign.

It was noted by Mr. Harvey that the Massachusetts Law: 267, sections 1 and 5 state that it is a criminal offense.

Mr. Merriam noted that there was blame to be distributed and was not in favor of fines being given.

Ms. Prescott noted that she understood that there was mis-communication but was very disappointed that procedure had not been followed, and was not initially in favor of fines being.

Ms. Taverna asked the board their opinion on whether fines should be leveled. Mr. Merrill said he felt that there should be some consequence, what would be an appropriate fine? Ms. Taverna noted that the inventory must be done. Mr. Guthrie asked for information re: inventory; who does them, and how much do they cost.? Ms. Taverna noted that she had given the names of those who could do the inventory and Mr. Merriam showed an inventory done on the Historical Commissions website. Ms. Prescott noted that a fine could be in kind, an inventory of 2 or 3 houses on the Historical Commissions "wish List" of homes to be inventoried.

Discussion

**MOTION:** Mr. Merriam moved in lieu of any fines Mr. Guthrie do the Inventory for 314 Dunstable Road and 2 others from the wish list, seconded by Ms. Prescott and so moved. 4-0 **Motion carries**

Mr. Guthrie will inform the Commission as to who they will be getting to do the inventories, and have them obtain the other 2 houses.

Ms. Taverna thanked Mr. Guthrie for attending the meeting and clearing up the issues.

Discussion re: the unauthorized signature, it was noted that a letter of complaint will be drafted by Ms. Taverna and sent to Mr. Cohen, Mr. Belansky, and Mr. Negron.

Discussion surrounding making sure that the wording in the application for demolition be BOLD and maybe RED, directing applicant to contact the commission right away. To avoid this issue in the future.

II. Discussion re our Procedures and Policies regarding the Demolition By-Laws

Ms. Taverna noted that at the last meeting some discussion surrounding the wording of the by law had been done. Mr. Merriam noted that he felt the wording and the by law was sufficient as it stands. Ms. Prescott felt there should be more "teeth" in the by law and has done some research of surrounding towns. Ms. Taverna noted that there is provision in the current by law has fines and penalties that have been used in the past. Ms. Taverna suggested that the commission draft

some policies and procedures to address the by law: a set of guidelines. Ms. Prescott had sent out a Flow chart earlier that day but the others had not seen it. This may be a good start as guidelines. The members will look at this flow chart and discuss at the next meeting.

Discussion re: monies set aside for inventories. Ms Taverna will contact Mr. Belansky for this.

Ms. Taverna also noted that there should be an update to the Cultural and Historic Preservation Plan and to put this on our website.

**MOTION:** Mr. Merriam moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Prescott and so moved.

Ms. Taverna closed the meeting at 9:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy A. Metz, Clerk