

MINUTES  
**Hamilton Historic District Commission / Historical Commission**  
November 8, 2018

Members Present: Edwin Howard, Chair, Katherine Mittelbusher, Jack Hauck, Margaret Meahl and Scott Clements.

Staff Present: Dorr Fox

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Ed Howard opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

MINUTES

Jack Hauck made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2018 and October 17, 2018 meetings. Margaret Meahl seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

KIOSK

Mr. Howard explained that there is not currently a good way for town government to communicate with the public. He noted that often there are public meetings and members of the public do not show up. He believes that if there is a kiosk that was operated by the Town, it would increase communication. He used the Town of Essex as an example. He explained that there is a kiosk in front of Town Hall as well as a police signboard to communicate meetings and other messages. He is thinking that the Commission could bring up the topic since it would most likely be located on Bay Road. It is likely to be in the historic district or in front of the senior center or Community House, which have both been designated as a historic structure. He would like to have this idea discussed so that the public can weigh in on the concept.

Mr. Hauck noted that the Town has a website, which is an outstanding method of communication. The website always lists the news in the Town. Ms. Meahl stated that the website is well done, however, she does not always check the website and therefore often misses announcements. She likes the concept of the kiosk. Mr. Howard passed around a picture of the Essex kiosk to the other members.

Mr. Howard believes that the Historic District Commission/Historical Commission should host a meeting for the public to discuss this topic. Mr. Hauck stated that he would rather have the conversation be focused on communication with the public. Mr. Howard stated that the discussion could be framed that way. Katherine Mittelbusher questioned whether the Town had ever considered an app? It could give people push notifications.

Scott Clements noted that what Mr. Howard is referring to as a kiosk is more like a billboard.

Mr. Howard stated that Essex National Heritage has funded a kiosk along the Route 133, including one that will be constructed in Essex. Dorr Fox stated that he had

contacted Essex National Heritage and they had been granted a Scenic Byway designation for the coastal route and that they had a grant to construct kiosks in each of the towns that the road passes through. He noted that he had passed out photos of what the kiosk will look like when constructed. He noted that the kiosks cost \$9,000 plus design costs. Ms. Mittelbusher thought this type of kiosk would be more within the Commission's purview. Mr. Hauck noted that when there was a previous proposal to place plaques on the buildings in town, there was opposition to the program.

Ms. Meahl noted that signs in front of the Community House always catch her attention when she passes by. She believes that this is a very visible location for a sign.

Mr. Howard stated that he would like to go to the Selectmen to discuss the concept of having a public forum on a sign/ kiosk. Mr. Hauck inquired whether Mr. Howard did not like his idea of having a forum on communication in general, including the kiosk concept. Mr. Howard stated that he is open to all ideas. He would like to go the Selectmen as a representative of the Commission. He would also like to have a representative of the Zoning Board of Appeals since they regulate signage.

Mr. Hauck stated that there are discussions surrounding the renovation of Town Hall. This could be a topic for this renovation. He believes that there should be a general discussion that asks citizens how best to reach them with information.

Mr. Howard stated that if he goes to the Selectmen, he would like to have one or more members of the Commission go with him.

Ms. Meahl inquired whether the kiosk would serve citizens of the Town to inform them of meetings, or whether it was intended to help tourists. Mr. Howard stated that he is more interested in the sign that Essex has that informs citizens of events and meetings. Mr. Hauck and Ms. Mittelbusher questioned whether the sign was within the Commission's purview. Mr. Howard stated that if the sign was to be located on the town hall site, it would be within the historic district, and therefore within their purview. Mr. Hauck stated that it could also be located within the park across from town hall, which would be within their purview.

Mr. Clements stated that if it was located in the vicinity of the Community House, where there is more traffic, there would be greater visibility. If it is for informational purposes, the point would be to get as many eyes as possible on it. This would put it outside of the historic district. Mr. Howard noted that the senior center has been designated a historic building.

Mr. Clements inquired how the sign would be funded. He wondered whether the Town would fund it or would it be paid through outside funding sources. Mr. Howard stated that the Lion's Club built it and paid for it in Essex.

Mr. Clements inquired whether there were other people requesting the kiosk. Mr. Howard stated that he is the person promoting it. Mr. Hauck suggested that they

could announce that at one of their meetings they could hold a public forum to discuss the topic and invite everyone from the town to attend. Mr. Howard stated that there may be concerns from the Zoning Board of Appeals since they govern signage. Mr. Hauck reminded him that they were discussing communication in general. Ms. Mittelbusher and Mr. Clements noted that the topic of communication is an issue for the selectmen.

It was determined that the Historic District Commission representatives would speak to the Selectmen. One representative could speak, but others would attend the meeting. Mr. Fox stated that he would work with Selectmen's office (Town Manager) to get the topic on the Selectmen's agenda.

#### TOWN HALL RENOVATION/RESTORATION

Mr. Howard stated that the Commission had determined that they would set a date to discuss the renovation of the town hall with the architect for the project. Mr. Fox stated that the Town Hall Building Committee has selected an architect, who is LLB Architects out of Pawtucket, Rhode Island and Worcester, Massachusetts. He passed around the response to the RFP by the firm. He noted that the committee is now saying that due to a limited amount of funds, they do not want to bring the architects to meet with boards and committees of the Town. He noted that building committee members have suggested that the Commission come up with a list of issues they are concerned about. This list would be sent to the Town Hall Building Committee and their architect.

Mr. Howard stated that he would prefer to have a meeting with the architect. He is concerned about issues such as landscaping and noted that Mr. Clements had stated this concern also. Landscaping and whether there would be a budget for landscaping was discussed. Mr. Clements stated that usually projects go over budget and landscape design often gets cut out, unless it is carefully thought out at the beginning of the process.

Mr. Fox noted that the project is anticipated to come before the Annual Town Meeting in April for funding. Plans will most likely need to be completed by January to get approval from the Community Preservation Committee. Ms. Mittelbusher stated that will have more questions once they see the plans.

Mr. Clements inquired what the plans would entail. Mr. Fox stated that this has not yet been determined. There has been some discussion that the project would not alter the exterior, might alter the interior and may provide for an addition in the rear of the building. There have been discussions about installing an elevator for handicapped access. He has not heard about alterations to the landscaping. Mr. Hauck noted that the front landscaping could not be too altered due to the memorial.

Mr. Howard noted that when he reviewed an old photograph, there was a kerosene lamp in front of the building. It might be nice to see such a lamp again. Mr. Hauck stated that the front of the building was intended to be open to clearly see the front

façade. Mr. Howard noted that the steel railing on the front steps is rotted out. It was noted that this would be redone with the renovation.

Mr. Howard stated that he wanted the architects to know that the Historic District Commission existed. Mr. Fox stated that he agreed and would like the architects to meet with the Commission. He noted that the Town Hall Building Committee selected the firm because they were preservation minded. Mr. Hauck stated that looking at their work, it appears that they focus on the interior of historic buildings and do not alter the exterior.

Mr. Fox stated that the architects will need to meet with the Community Preservation Committee during the winter to obtain their approval. Perhaps, they could meet with the Historic District Commission at a joint meeting with the CPC, or before the CPC meeting. It was determined that the Commission would like to review the plans during the winter months before the project was sent to Town Meeting. It was determined that Mr. Fox would send an email to the Town Hall Building Committee to explain that the Historic District Commission wishes to meet with the architect and to arrange a time that this could be completed.

#### HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Mr. Fox stated that he prefers that a consultant put the guidelines together. Ms. Meahl inquired whether anyone knew who put together Wenham's guidelines. Mr. Hauck stated that he was in Wenham when their guidelines were created. He noted that the public will review the guidelines and that they can scare the public.

Mr. Fox stated that the guidelines he sent the Commission from Falmouth were prepared by a consultant named Eric Dray.

Mr. Fox stated that he thought the guidelines would focus on architectural and preservation issues, not procedural issues. He stated that he had hoped that the Commission members might know some consultants. He noted that Ms. Mittelbuser had worked with preservation consultant Gretchen Schuler previously. Ms. Mittelbuser thought that she had retired. However, she know a couple of other preservation consultants.

Mr. Clements stated that he thought that hiring a consultant to prepare a document would be better than the Commission trying to cobble something together by themselves. He believes that they should request the funds. Ms. Meahl concurred and noted that they need to put together guidelines that will be accepted by the public.

Mr. Hauck stated that they have a study that was used to help create the district. This will be a good tool for the consultant to use. Mr. Fox stated that the regulations will be less extensive since most of the buildings are residential and there are few commercial buildings in the district. Mr. Hauck stated that there will need to be sign regulations. He believes that some of the residential buildings will become businesses.

Mr. Howard noted that their discussion on the Church's roof was difficult. He is hoping that future discussions will not be that difficult. Mr. Clements stated that once they have guidelines, the development review will be less stressful for both the applicants and the Commission. Mr. Hauck noted that they do not have previous decisions of the Commission. Mr. Fox stated that it would be good if he had guidelines that he could hand out to applicants.

Ms. Meahl stated that she liked Wenham's guidelines. They were easier to read and they were concise. They seemed to address the issues, they were easy to read and were edited well. Mr. Hauck noted they were created by a consultant. Ms. Meahl stated that they could use Wenham's guidelines as a guide. Mr. Fox stated that if they do not get the funding for the guidelines through the budget process, they could use Wenham's guidelines as a guide. Ms. Mittelbusher noted that there are several issues to consider and they should think it over how to prepare the guidelines very carefully.

Mr. Fox will look into the costs of the project and discuss them with Mr. Howard. Ms. Mittelbusher will send Mr. Fox the names of consultants that she recommends. Mr. Hauck made a motion to request funding for the creation of design guidelines for the historic district. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Ms. Meahl made a motion adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.