



TOWN OF WHATLEY Whately, Massachusetts

Historical Commission

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Written correspondence should be addressed to:
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Minutes of the March 20, 2023 Zoom Meeting, 5 pm

Meeting participants: Donna Wiley, chair, Susan Baron, Allison Bell, Judy Markland, Alan McArdle.

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

The minutes of the February 27, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

Agenda items – .

1. Center School

The Select Board has accepted our recommendation to issue an RFP for the sale of the Center School since no bids were received for the lease of the property. The Historical Commission has been asked to provide the wording needed for an historic preservation restriction. Several questions were raised in the discussion that followed.

- a. Who will hold the restriction and how long does it last. In perpetuity?
- b. Will the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) conduct oversight and enforce the restriction for a private entity? We think not at least at the detailed level.
- c. Does MHC need to approve the restriction? We think it does regardless of ownership. What will the preservation restriction contain? Judy Markland will produce a draft list of the exterior features of historical interest, which may include the roof, outside stairs, some doorways if they are original to the building and other elements. The Milk Bottle and access to it will likely need to be mentioned in the draft preservation restriction document, which Donna will produce for discussion at our next meeting after consultation with Michael Steinitz at MHC.

An RFP document from a similar project in Maynard, Massachusetts is attached.

Appendix C has information on the preservation restrictions which were of interest to the Historical Commission in that town.

The Historical Commission will need to meet review the draft preservation restriction document before it is sent to the Selectboard. That meeting has been scheduled for April 3 at 5:30. Members of the commission are encouraged to view the outside of the building before then.

2. East School

Some initial activity has occurred at the East School. The owners have submitted an application for a site plan review and a special permit. The Planning Board has requested additional information on the project in order to comply with the regulations it set

forward. Some aspects of the project will require special permission.

The Commission voted unanimously to formally declare the building as an “historically significant” structure under the Town’s Adaptive Reuse Bylaw. A letter to that effect will be sent to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals with a copy to Robert Obear (who is conducting the building construction).

3. Indicators for likely archaeological sites

Alan spoke briefly about the document describing some of the methods used to identify potential archaeological sites as well as some of the legal ground available to us to assign significance to them. A revised version of the document may be posted on our portion of the town web site, which will provide some guidance on how the Commission reaches decisions about potential archaeological significance. Alan and Allison will try to map our assessments onto a map of the town.

4. MACRIS area submission for North Street.

Judy Markland provided a document (attached) as a source of information on the uses of North Street area. It also includes some proposals on what would be included in the area. More photos of the area, especially of the older buildings, would be helpful. Drafts of data sheets would also be helpful especially to build a history of the area. The project will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Commission..

The next Historical Commission meeting will be on April 3, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at about 6:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan McArdle