

From: Lois Laczko February 9, 2010 10:42:09 AM  
Subject: Historic District Commission Minutes 01/07/2010 ADOPTED  
To: SimsburyCT\_HistComm  
Cc:

ADOPTED

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING  
January 7, 2010

I. CALL TO ORDER

Elizabeth Woollacott, Chairman, called the Historic District Commission to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were also present: Marc Lubetkin, Kenneth Feder, Paul Lanza, Evan Woollacott and Dave Freitas. Also in attendance were Lynn Charest, Zoning Enforcement Officer and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

None were needed.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of December 3, 2009 meeting

Dr. Feder made a motion to approve the December 3, 2009 minutes as written. Mr. Woollacott seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

The R.O.I. (Return On Investment) of Historic Preservation – Dr. Kenneth L. Feder

Dr. Feder stated that he and Ms. Charest attended a meeting regarding return on investments; it was a great meeting. The presentation was not directly applicable to what this Commission does, although the presenter could show, mathematically, how it makes more economic sense to save historic houses than to tear them down and build something new.

Dr. Feder stated that the most compelling facts were the real numbers regarding the direct economic advantage of living in the Historic District.

It is clear; the property values go up for houses in the Historic District faster than those that are not in the District. Dr. Feder passed around graphs showing these statistics from other States. One graph showed houses in a Historic District that are comparable to outside the District. He stated that the mean value of a home inside a Historic District was between \$59,000 - \$67,000 versus a home outside of the District.

Dr. Feder stated that most people who live in the District appreciate the District as preserving a part of Simsbury. He stated that people's bottom line is being increased by being in the District. He stated that this part of the presentation was extremely valuable. This is the kind information that the Commission needs to tell residents. When an application comes in, people need to know that their home values will rise when things are done right.

Ms. Charest stated that the statistics in the presentation were not only for affluent communities; they were for middle class communities.

Mr. Lubetkin stated that when the inventory is done, he feels that the Commission should look at the opportunity regarding presenting this material to the people in those homes and inquiring about expanding the District, especially in light of the Charrette. He stated that the information that came out of the Charrette indicated that they would have liked to have seen more national registered properties.

Mr. Woollacott stated that all of these statistics should be included when making a report to the First Selectmen. The Commission members agreed.

Dr. Feder stated that he would also like to attend another meeting where the presentation would be regarding Heritage Tourism. Ms. Charest stated that she is a member of the New England National Scenic Trails Committee. She stated that Simsbury has a section of the Metacomet Trail on the eastern ridge that is part of a federally recognized national scenic trail. This trail will run from the Long Island Sound through Connecticut, through Massachusetts and up to New Hampshire. The focus is on how the trail goes through very populated areas and how the trail can tie in with heritage tourism.

Dr. Feder stated that the scenic road signs are up; they look beautiful. Ms. Charest asked that Mr. Lanza call the sign maker to get an updated quote.

Supplemental Certified Local Government Grant Consultant – Lucas Karmazinas

Mr. Karmazinas stated that he sent out a document regarding the properties that he wanted to look at more closely to all of the Commission

members. He stated that he has now narrowed down the properties that he would like to look at even more so. In order to decide what properties to include, he stated that he looked at surveys that already had been done in order to get an idea of what had been covered, what types of buildings had been covered, what areas had been looked at and what had already been included on the national register. He then started to look for properties that might have national register potential. Mr. Karmazinas stated that this was important because he wanted to have not only the benefit of surveying the structures, but to have the next step potential as far as protections and documentation, which leads into the potential for historic districts after they are registered.

Mr. Karmazinas stated that he was excited to see the wealth of structures in the tightly knit area around Hopmeadow Street and West Street, which is all of the old Ensign Bickford housing. This area represents a nice cross section of development from this period, which is not represented in the other surveys.

Mr. Karmazinas stated that he now has enough properties; he did narrow them down even further since he e-mailed out the last packet of information to the Commission members. He stated that these 155 properties are what he would like to approach.

Dr. Feder questioned what percentage of the Ensign Bickford housing is left. Mr. Karmazinas stated that it is about 90% or more. By 1936, when Ensign Bickford wrote a history, it cited that Simsbury had 160 tenements.

Dr. Feder questioned if the 155 houses that were selected were spread over the Town or in one area. Mr. Karmazinas stated that they are in two tightly knit neighborhoods. He stated that they run from 475 Hopmeadow Street, to the intersection of West Street and then turns west onto West Street and runs along that corridor.

In response to a question by Mr. Lubetkin regarding the Charrette properties, Mr. Karmazinas stated that those properties were outside of what he is looking at. Mr. Lubetkin suggested that although they do not need to be included in the inventory, this Commission should look at recommending them for national register consideration because of what the Charrette cited regarding preserving them.

Ms. Charest stated that the way that Mr. Karmazinas is researching these houses is great; they will get the whole history of the Town. He is not just concentrating on a certain era or type of house.

Ms. Charest questioned if they would be getting a list of the 155

property addresses. Mr. Karmazinas stated that he would submit those addresses.

Dr. Feder questioned if the documentation for all of the houses were available. Mr. Karmazinas stated that the information, to some degree, is good. He stated that he has the documentation regarding Ensign Bickford's ownership; now it is a matter of pinning down when they were constructed.

Dr. Feder questioned if there was anything that this Commission could do for Mr. Karmazinas. Mr. Karmazinas stated that any inside contacts would be helpful.

Mr. Lubetkin questioned if the Commission should ask the Historical Society if they would like to come to the next meeting to listen to Mr. Karmazinas' presentation. The Commission members agreed that the Chairman should make this invitation to the Historical Society.

The Commission members thanked Mr. Karmazinas for all of this great information.

V. OTHER BUSINESS AS MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

There was none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Feder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Mr. Lubetkin seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

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Elizabeth Woollacott, Chairman