

From: Lois Laczko June 8, 2011 12:57:12 PM
Subject: Historic District Commission Minutes 06/02/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_HistComm
Cc:

DRAFT

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 2, 2011

I. ROLL CALL

The June 2, 2011 Historic District Commission meeting started at 7:35 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Denise Alfeld, David Freitas, Paul Lanza, and Marc Lubetkin. Also in attendance were Lynn Charest, Zoning Enforcement Officer, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 5, 2011

Mr. Lanza moved to approve the Minutes of May 5, 2011 as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Freitas and passed unanimously.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Election of Officers

Ms. Charest said that this Commission needs to elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary for the next year.

Mr. Lanza moved to defer the election of the Historic District Commission officers until the July 7, 2011 meeting when more members would be present. The motion was seconded by Mr. Freitas and passed with a 3-1 vote. Ms. Alfeld, Mr. Freitas and Mr. Lanza voted yes. Mr. Lubetkin voted no.

Ms. Alfeld said she has read the strategic plan, and also the HDC booklet, and understands what this Commission's purview is, but she would like to know what this Commission's mission is. She said that she thinks that they

might have the opportunity to expand their role in some areas, but she asked if there are other entities within the Town that are covering already some of the things they are doing.

Mr. Lubetkin said that there is a course that is offered by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Culture/Tourism that he and Ms. Charest have attended. The official role of the Historic District Commission was explained. He had brought in all the written materials and the Commission did talk about what the roles were. He said that his understanding was that there are multiple levels of involvement. The smallest, and least intrusive, is the approval of Certificate of Appropriateness. Their role, because they are a Certified Local Government, is significantly greater than that. Mr. Lubetkin said that they are supposed to represent the historic interests of the community, not just East Weatogue Street.

Ms. Alfeld asked if this differs from the Historical Society. Mr. Lubetkin said that it is totally different and that is why they wanted to partner with both the Historical Society and the Library to share resources. He said that the Historical Society and the Library hold the archives for Ensign-Bickford. They are two primary bodies that help control the historic nature of the community. Between the three of them, they could address some of the strategic items more efficiently. Mr. Lubetkin said that he and Ms. Woollacott had met a number of times with both the Historical Society and the Library.

Ms. Alfeld said that it sounds like there is not complete consensus within this Commission as to what their purview is. Mr. Frietas said that it sounds like a lot of things are duplicated. He said that they have done a lot of inventorying, but now they are talking about taking a role in what the main downtown area should look like. Mr. Lubetkin said that the inventory process helps identify the historic resources in the community and that is part of this Commission's charge. In terms of monitoring and directing them, it is not their purview. If requested, they can provide guidance.

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Ms. Alfeld asked if there had been an original Strategic Plan that had been approved. Mr. Lubetkin said yes. Mr. Lanza asked if the co-ordination of this should be authored and mandated by the Board of Selectmen. It would be to co-ordinate the various committees and to make sure that the input is

shared, and even desired. Mr. Lubetkin said that the idea of having the Selectmen agree with what this Commission is doing has already been done. They met with Mary Glassman who had a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to present this idea. The Board of Selectmen does not have any authority over the Historical Society, or the Library. Mary suggested that it was up to this Commission to make that bridge. Mr. Lubetkin said that they were to create an opportunity for the town through the Building and Planning Departments, that if a historic structure was to be changed the applicant would be alerted that the Historic Commission is here as a resource. This passed two years ago. Mr. Lubetkin said this Commission now has a check box on the building permit. This means that if you are located in the historic district, you may have to go before the Historic District Commission for a COA prior to being issued a building permit.

b. Historic District Commission Strategic Plan, continued discussion

Marc Lubetkin put together some preliminary steps to complete the strategic plan, or at least move it forward.

1. Gaining feedback on the strategic plan with the HDC, Mary Glassman, and Anita Meilert, etc.

Mr. Lubetkin said that he feels that this commission should reconnect on this topic along with the Simsbury Historical Society by inviting them to a Historic District Commission meeting. He also feels that the Board of Selectman representative should show up at least once to a Historic District Commission meeting. The representative would then be able to communicate some of these items to the Board of Selectmen. He feels that it should be the Chairman of this commission that should ask the representative to meet with HDC.

2. The Historic District Commission maintains a broad and representative membership that has the requisite knowledge and abilities.

Mr. Lubetkin said that they have been talking about each individual to completing a bio. This commission would then put it on a graph and cross reference the skills and abilities. It would show how each person contributes, and how it meets the criteria that are established through the culture tourism guidelines.

3. The basis of this item is to provide information to the rest of the community that we have an interest in retaining the historic character, and that this commission is here to support them.

Mr. Lubetkin said that the first step would be to identify the boards/commissions that impact historic preservation. Identify the chairmen and

draft a letter to arrange a meeting with the members of the HDC and the members of that board/commission.

4. Funding and grants for the inventories.

Mr. Lubetkin said that they had asked Ms. Charest to continue the process.

5. The funds should be used for an inventory.

Mr. Lubetkin said that the results of the inventory should be entered into a database. He said that because of the challenge of communicating what they are looking for, this Commission needs to be meeting with Town Officials.

Mr. Lubetkin said that when they do the next inventory the researcher needs to start creating a list and work with Hiram's office to put it into place. This should be part of the grant request.

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6. The list of significant properties should be shared with the various bodies, commissions, and boards.

Mr. Lubetkin said that once the researcher has been hired, and the work has been put together, the commission needs to sit down with the town offices (planning, building, engineering, etc.). Based on what Mr. Woollacott said at the last meeting, it makes a lot of sense to have a memorandum of understanding, that can be shared with the other boards/commissions, saying that we have met and talked with you, and here is what we can do for you.

7. Advisory Board

Mr. Lubetkin said that they have to finish their own inventory of what skill sets they have, and then do a gap analysis and find out what they are missing. A list of potential candidates to sit on an advisory board would then be put together.

8. The Historic District Commission should be a source of information for the town and the Historic District.

Mr. Lubetkin said that he added this item based upon this commission's commitment of a year and a half ago that they would hold their meetings, and also hold an open session at the beginning of each meeting. He said

that at the class he took it was recommended that the Historic District Commission's have an open forum either at the beginning or the end of their meetings. People can ask unofficial questions at this time. Mr. Lubetkin said that they should be a source of information to the town and should hold all their meetings regardless of whether they have a Certificate of Appropriateness request. He said that communications should be made annually to the greater community that they are available as a resource for historic preservation. He suggested that this could be through the newspapers.

c. Supplemental Certified Local Government Grant (SCLG)

Ms. Charest said that she is working on it. Ms. Alfeld asked if this has a deadline. Ms. Charest said that this is a rolling grant, but with the state budget there seems to be some hesitancy. The discussion on this item will continue to the next meeting.

Ms. Alfeld went over the tasks saying that she is looking into the board profile for the next meeting and contact information is needed for Liz Banco, Tourism Committee. Ms. Alfeld also suggested that a letter should be drafted from the Chairman of this Commission to formerly invite Moira Wertheimer to a Historic District Commission meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 7th.

V. OTHER BUSINESS AS MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Alfeld moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Freitas and passed unanimously.