

Oct 23 2023 8:48 am



*The City of Fitchburg*  
*Massachusetts*

**Fitchburg Historical Commission**

718 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

<http://www.ci.fitchburg.ma.us/327/Historical-Commission>

**Meeting Minutes for the Fitchburg Historical Commission Hybrid Meeting  
August 31, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Keith Chenot, Don Ostrowski, Ellen DiGeronimo, and Andrew Lipasti

Members Absent: Charles Sternaimolo

Meeting Guests: Mark Barbadoro, Fitchburg Building Commissioner

Chair Keith Chenot called the meeting to order at 3:12pm and noted a quorum was present.

**1. Public comment period:** None

**2. Review and approve minutes of the July 27, 2023, meeting:**

Keith noted one edit in the minutes. Don made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Andy. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.

**3. Update of Monument Park repairs:**

Keith noted getting a quote from Boston Bench Co. for 8 benches for Monument Park. The cost is \$2,300 each. He sent the quote to Mayor DiNatale, and the Mayor replied that he is looking for our help with fund raising for the benches. Ellen noted it would be nice to get people to donate funds to help pay for the benches. Keith said he is looking at getting a price for engraved plaques to put on the benches from the donors. Ellen asked: what happened to the previous park benches?

Don mentioned seeing indentations on the park's entry steps. Keith said those are likely from cast iron bollards that were on the steps in the past. There are historical photos that show the bollards.

Keith said he hasn't talked to the Parks Dept. regarding the repair of the cast iron railings, or also the repair or replacement of the Clara Barton memorial bricks. Andy asked if the bench company could do the cast iron molds for the railings. Keith noted he asked the bench company about the molds, and also noted we have a list of cast iron companies to work with. We need to get the cast iron railings repairs on the Parks Dept. agenda. Both Ellen and Keith talked about repairs needed to the monument itself.

**4. Update on historic building demolition delay:**

We discussed doing an ordinance for historic building demolition delay with Mark Barbadoro, Fitchburg Building Commissioner. He noted his previous work in six communities all of which had demolition delay bylaws. Don talked about our work in pursuing both stone wall and demolition delay ordinances. Mark noted the other cities and towns used a historical building list to access when a demolition was being considered. He suggested that Fitchburg could use technology and/or a mapping system to note our historic buildings and to help flag them for demolition delay. The city's IT Dept. would need to do the software for this type of system.

Keith mentioned how building dates are recorded and that city buildings older than 1900 are listed as built in 1900. After 1900 the correct building dates are used. Mark said we should look at creating and using historic districts or code 40C districts to help with demolition delay. Mark likes the idea of using a demolition delay bylaw and likes the use of historic districts. Keith said historic districts are enabled by a vote of the community and are important for the city. As an example he noted our Monument Park Local Historic District which includes the park and about 11 buildings.

Keith reviewed the information and purpose of our proposed demolition delay and noted “it’s just a delay,” it’s not meant for us and the building owners to discuss options, it’s not a restriction.

Keith thanked Mark for attending our meeting, and for his input and comments. Ellen added a comment and talked about Fitchburg’s redevelopment in the 1970’s. She noted there being a good group that worked on development plans with three main points including the Main St. parking garage and historic Mill St. She talked about buildings being used for mixed use on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors. She likes the idea of a demolition delay and preserving historical architecture, noting the Syndicate Building in Moran Square as an example.

**5. Update on appreciation and preservation of historic stone walls and structures:**

Keith noted to Mark that this is a separate item from the demolition delay item. Don suggested creating PowerPoint files to help promote our two ordinances. Ellen noted doing PPT’s would be a good idea, and Keith noted we can post them to our website and do them like an education piece. Don noted he will work on them. Keith noted we all need to think about ideas and photos for the PPT’s.

**6. Update on Historic Districts information brochure/map information guide, signage, web posting:**

Keith thanked us for our edits and comments on this brochure and he is working with FSU on QR code links and final edits.

**7. Historic Marker update:**

We have a new sign painter and two historic markers in process. The sign painter has noted having a paint issue with the markers and is working on it.

**8. Project to document and share Main Street building histories, historic districts, tax credit, and other restoration/reuse incentives:**

Ellen noted this item is in process and moving along.

**9. Commission membership vacancies update:**

We continue to look for nominations for the two Commission vacancies including a realtor and a lawyer. Ellen is working on a candidate.

**10. FHC website additions: Links to architectural styles, NPS Preservation Briefs, etc.:**

Keith discussed adding links to our Historical Commission website. This could include items such as historic districts, architectural styles, and when buildings were built including histories and photos.

**11. New business: None**

**12. Next meeting:**

Historical Commission Meeting: September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM, City Hall Room 101A and Zoom hybrid.

**13. Adjournment:**

Ellen made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Don. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:16pm.

Submitted by Andrew Lipasti, Secretary, Fitchburg Historical Commission