

Nov 29 2023 4:10 pm



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
September 28, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Keith Chenot, Don Ostrowski, Charles Sternaimolo, and Andrew Lipasti

Members Absent: Ellen DiGeronimo

Meeting Guests: None

Chair Keith Chenot called the meeting to order at 3:11pm and noted a quorum was present.

1. Public comment period: None

2. Review and approve minutes of the August 31, 2023, meeting:

Don made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Keith. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.

3. Update of Monument Park repairs and bench installation:

Keith sent an email to the Fitchburg Parks Dept. requesting to get Monument Park repairs and benches on their November agenda. This is to make a case for budgeting and coordination of items, and noting some funding will be needed. He also noted that we should meet with the DPW Commissioner Nick Erickson. We will work on a DPW meeting presentation as we are in a design review stage.

Charles talked about our meeting with Mayor DiNatale regarding benches for the Park and that he did not talk about funds for the benches, but now wants us to help work on fund raising. Don noted the Upper Common has 16 benches and the city must have paid for them. Keith talked about the park bench sponsorships flyer he is working on. Don mentioned that the Abolitionist Park has benches without a middle rail. Both Charles and Don noted they have not seen much loitering lately but have seen people loitering in the doorways of buildings.

Keith noted we need to work on the meetings with the DPW and Parks Dept. Charles added that there is an election coming up and the outcome might change funding or budgeting for items such as for the park items. Keith mentioned that we are a design review group and not a budgeting group.

4. Update on historic building demolition delay:

Don noted working on a PowerPoint presentation for this item. He noted a working title "Demolition Delay for Historically Significant Structures" vs. using Historical Buildings.

There are 12 Gateway Cities on the list of cities with a Demolition Delay. Fitchburg is a Gateway City but does not have a demolition delay ordinance. He has looked at master plans for Fitchburg from 1978, 1996, and 2018. In the 2018 document for Fitchburg's Strategic Plan there is mention of an item to "Retain Historic Character."

Don had sent us a link by email with a topic of “Things to Do in Fitchburg” and he noted there was no mention of the Wallace Library or the train station. Andy asked about adding mention of historic buildings that have been saved and are being worked on. Keith commented on the PPT and suggested some edits, and adding photos.

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

Keith noted that Don is also working on a PPT for this proposed ordinance or public knowledge education item. Don mentioned that we need a lawyer on our Commission to help with this type of proposal. Keith added that we are trying to make the city aware of stone walls and structures preservation.

Keith and Don discussed the use of laws and ordinances and how they apply to this type of item.

We need to add to the PPT images of unique Fitchburg stone structures and walls. Charles mentioned that Joy Contois had notes and photos of stone structures and that we could check with Susan at the Historical Society on those items. Andy will check at the Historical Society for any of these Joy Contois items. We also need to look at the Rollstone Quarry work and granite use around the city.

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

Keith noted making progress on final edits and QR code links. This is a partnership with FSU.

7. Historic Marker update:

We are hoping to get two historic markers done. 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 is working on this item.

9. Commission membership vacancies update:

Don is working on a lead for a Commission member. He also noted that we need a lawyer to help with our ordinances.

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

Keith discussed adding links to our Historical Commission website and is working on it. Andy asked about adding our Historical Commission website address to the letterhead on our Agendas and Minutes. Keith will send him a letterhead file to use with the addition of the website address.

11. New business:

Andy noted that Ellen DiGeronimo is being honored on Nov. 4 at a Fitchburg Cultural Alliance celebration at the Senior Center. Keith showed a copy of the celebration flyer which also notes a celebration of 45 years of the FCA.

12. Next meeting:

Historical Commission Meeting: October 26, 2023, 3:00 PM, City Hall Room 101A and Zoom hybrid.

13. Adjournment:

Don made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Andy. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm.

Submitted by Andrew Lipasti, Secretary, Fitchburg Historical Commission