

Jun 27 2023 11:21 am

Fitchburg Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes for the Fitchburg Historical Commission Hybrid Meeting on April 27, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.

Members Present: Keith Chenot, Don Ostrowski, Sam Blair, and Andrew Lipasti

Members Absent: Ellen DiGeronimo, Charles Sternaimolo

Meeting Guests: none

Chairman Keith Chenot called the meeting to order at 3:16pm and noted a quorum was present.

1. Public comment period: None

2. Review and approve minutes of the March 30, 2023, meeting:

Keith noted two corrections to the NewVue guest names. Don made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Keith. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.

3. Freedom's Way Hidden Treasures list and host May event :

The event will be on Saturday, May 20 at 11:00am. It will start at the Historical Society building and include a walking tour of Monuments and Architectural Treasures on the Upper Common and Monument Park. The monuments and sculptures at these sites will be discussed, as well as architectural information of the area buildings. Susan Navarre and Keith will be leading the walking tour. Keith will be working on a map of the area locations. Andy will be working on a handout with info on both the war monuments and other monuments, and he will be available at the Society building.

This date will coincide with a Fitchburg Food Truck Festival at 166 Boulder Drive from 12-7pm.

4. Update of Monument Park:

We discussed the restoration repairs and updates for Monument Park. They include:

- Recommendation for park bench replacement
- Cast iron fencing repair and restoration
- Stone entry step repair
- Monument base repair

Keith mentioned working with the DPW and Parks Commissioners on this item. This is an ongoing item. Don noted that the Upper Common has about 13 benches and there are none in Monument Park. It was noted that we have the Mayor's support on this issue. Don also discussed the No Dogs Allowed sign in the park and if we can request this to be removed. He will look at contacting the Parks Commissioner on this item.

5. Update on historic building demolition delay:

Don talked with Joan David, the Mayor's Executive Assistant, and she noted we should be able present both the Demolition Delay Ordinance and the Stonewall Preservation Ordinance to the city officials. Joan said she would review both ordinances and discuss them with Community Development and Planning.

Don noted that the City Hall Committee can be used as a model in the sense that at the beginning of its meetings, there were differences of views on whether to demolish city hall or to renovate it. By the end of their series of meetings, all the members of the committee were unanimously agreed to renovate it. Since we expect opposition among some members of City Council, we can take this as an opportunity of the need for both ordinances.

We can also contact the Historical Society for a presentation of the Demolition Delay Ordinance to the Board of Directors. Andy will check on the next scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

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

Don talked with Joan David, the Mayor's Executive Assistant, and she noted we should be able present both the Demolition Delay Ordinance and the Stonewall Preservation Ordinance to the city officials. Joan said she would review both ordinances and discuss them with Community Development and Planning.

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7. Update on Historic Districts information brochure/map information guide, signage, web posting and FSU faculty-led student project coordination ongoing for fall/spring 2021/2022 and 2022/2023:

Keith noted he is waiting on a final edit from the designer. He emailed us two files of a draft Historic Districts brochure, and one file representing a draft of a street sign for the Moran Square District. The proposed brochure is to be a tri-fold with fold down printed on both sides on 11" x 17" paper stock. The proposed street signs should be around 24" high.

Keith reviewed the brochure images of the Historic Districts, the map of the districts, and the overlay district of the H. M. Francis designed buildings. He is working on a final draft of the brochure and will be sharing it with the city agencies for comment.

8. Wallace Building entry stones reuse – “temporarily” stored in FRA space:

No updates.

9. Historic Marker update:

Keith noted there have been one or two new inquiries for the markers. The Historical Commission website has been updated with the new historic marker sign brochure. He will look at getting about 200 brochures printed.

Don asked if there was an update on the customers for the previous paid markers. Keith noted he has not heard of any updates and will send a reminder to the previous sign maker's family.

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

Ellen is working on this. Keith has talked with Ellen about a nomination for a National Register Historic District for the Upper Common. The Massachusetts Historical Commission is helping with this historic district application process.

11. Commission membership vacancy update:

Keith noted we have contacted the local Realtor Association looking for two nominations for the Commission vacancy. He notes this is a work in progress.

12. New business: None.

13. Next meeting:

Historical Commission Meeting: May 25, 2023, 3:00 PM, City Hall Room 101A and Zoom hybrid.

14. Adjournment:

Andy made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Don. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:08pm.

Submitted by Andrew Lipasti, Secretary, Fitchburg Historical Commission