

Apr 03 2023 7:59 am

Fitchburg Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes for the Fitchburg Historical Commission Hybrid Meeting on February 23, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.

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

Members Absent: Sam Blair, Meagen Donoghue, Charles Sternaimolo

Meeting Guests: None

Chairman Keith Chenot called the meeting to order at 3:13pm and noted a quorum was present.

- 1. Public comment period:** Keith read a comment from Jacquelyn Wehtje regarding the Commission's discussion of historic tax credits.
- 2. Review and approve minutes of the January 26, 2023, meeting:**
Ellen moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Don. The motion was approved unanimously by members present.
- 3. Freedom's Way Hidden Treasures list and host May event – Need volunteer(s):**
We generate the Hidden Treasures list. Ellen noted she is interested. We discussed monuments that should be included such as the ones in Monument Park and the Upper Common. Andy will check with Susan Navarre at the Historical Society on this.
- 4. Update of Monument Park:**
We are looking at 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 noted a reply from Nick Erickson, Public Works Commissioner, stating that he will pass the recommendations on to the Parks and Recreation Dept.

We got another reply from Nick Capasso at the Fitchburg Art Museum, and he noted a contact for doing sculpture restoration work.

Keith contacted James Bunnell, the Director of Parks and Recreation regarding the Monument Park work. Keith mentioned he will follow through with any progress. We have some good movement on this item.

- 5. Update on historic building demolition delay:**
Don noted we should set up another meeting with the Fitchburg Historical Society for a demolition delay presentation. He is doing further research on lists of cities and towns with a demolition delay ordinance, and will be adding to his demolition delay resource book.

Ellen noted we need to educate people on historic buildings. Keith commented that there needs to be a time period for building evaluation and that there may be types of fast review periods such as for public safety.

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

Andy noted that he and Don got positive feedback from their stone wall preservation presentation to the Fitchburg Historical Society.

Don mentioned that we need to identify our Rollstone Granite walls in the city. Ellen noted that she likes the granite walls on High St. and Kimball St. Keith mentioned that Peter Capodagli has lots of knowledge about the Rollstone Quarry, and that there is a granite wall on Mechanic St.

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 had a meeting with the designer and others in February. They are trying to get the graphics wrapped-up, and are working on six different district signs. This is an ongoing item with good progress.

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

This is an ongoing item. Keith mentioned the Rodney Wallace R.W. stone may be placed at the Fitchburg Public Library, and that other stones can go in city parks or other locations.

9. Historic Marker – new sign maker update:

Keith gave an update on this item. There have no replies from the NJ site, and Wass-Arthur Signs in Fitchburg has agreed to do these historic markers.

Ellen made a motion that we accept Wass-Arthur Signs as the company to do the historic markers. The motion was seconded by Andy, and was approved unanimously.

We are looking to get reimbursements for the previous paid for markers that have not been made. Keith is working on a new historic marker brochure and application.

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

Ellen is working on this item, and has a new map from the city. She is gathering information on all the buildings and needs information on the Upper Common area buildings.

11. New business:

Andy asked about the Rail Trail end location near Fitchburg Plumbing Supply in Fitchburg. We had a short discussion about it. Ellen volunteered to help with discussion about the end location. Keith and Ellen will try to contact the trail planning leaders.

Don talked about beavers and their effect on the rivers and streams through Fitchburg. He brought up questions like: What was Fitchburg like before the industrial boom? Where were the beaver dams and did they affect the landscape?

12. Next meeting:

Historical Commission Meeting: March 30, 2023, 3:00 PM, City Hall Room 101A and Zoom hybrid.

13. Adjournment:

Ellen made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Andy. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:55pm.

Submitted by Andrew Lipasti, Secretary, Fitchburg Historical Commission