

MINUTES

Longmeadow Historical Commission Meeting Thursday, March 21, 2019 7:00 pm, in the Meeting Room at The Fire Station

In Attendance: **Maggy Cohn, Barbara Fitzgerald, Beth Hoff, Dave Marinelli Jeff Spear, Tim Casey and Steve Weiss**

Guests: Jim Moran, Betsy and Al Mckee, Shannon Walsh (PVPC), Andy Krar (Town Engineer)

Called to order at 7:05

Minutes from February 21, 2019 meeting approved as amended

Old Business

The Barns of Longmeadow – Shannon Walsh, Historical Preservation Planner, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, presented the *Longmeadow Outbuilding Research Project* report she prepared. It will be posted on the town website.

Collaboration with East Longmeadow – 125 years since our split

Jim Moran, Longmeadow Historical Society, reported on East Longmeadow's 125 year anniversary committee events that have occurred or are in the planning stage.

May 23, 1894 was the date of the decision to split the two villages and July 1, 1894 is the date the split went into effect. There is a lot of information available about the split including an article from *The Reminder* that was published in February. Jim is looking for people/organizations to collaborate on a project about the history of Longmeadow around this time period. At least he would like to have an exhibit in place in time for Long Meddowe Days. He will set up a planning meeting in the near future and hope that interested parties will attend and work with him on this project.

Jeff reported that Bruce from the East Longmeadow Historical Society is interested in doing something but manpower is an issue. They would like to do something but nothing definite planned.

New Business

Section 106 Review – Longmeadow Street Intersection Improvements.

The engineering firm of Fuss & O'Neill sent a letter to the Historical Commission, as required by law, asking the committee to review and comment on the project's impact on the historically significant Longmeadow Northern Historic District. This area of Longmeadow is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Andrew Krar, Town Engineer, reported on this project which is a Mass DOT project under TIP meaning that it is funded with state and federal money and that the project must conform to Mass DOT standards concerning pedestrian crossings. The Joint Transportation Committee makes recommendations about TIP project funding. It currently appears on the Mass DOT 2023 project plan but it could get pushed back further. The project is currently at the 25% design level. Public hearings will be held when the design comes back from MASS DOT. Andy expects this will be late in the summer.

The mission of the Longmeadow Historical Commission is to identify, preserve and educate the Town about its unique heritage.

According to Andy, the project is mainly a repaving job. It is approximately a 6.5 million dollar project. The intersections at Forest Glen and Longmeadow Streets and Converse and Longmeadow Streets will have additional turning lanes. Also deteriorated sidewalks will be repaired, new sidewalks added, storm drains repaired. Besides widening the road, the sidewalks on the east side of Longmeadow St. will be shifted over to the west. On the east side the sidewalk will extend to the Forest Park entrance. A new sidewalk is proposed on the north side of Forest Glen. Bike lanes will be added. Sensor controlled traffic lights with left turn phases will be installed on poles, not strung on lines. Similar lights have already been installed at the Dickinson and Converse Streets intersection.

The Committee had some questions, comments and concerns.

Are there any exemptions for National Historic District status in regard to ADA compliance for the sidewalk design?

Will it be necessary to remove trees for this project?

Bike lanes are confusing.

Glad that the design does not include rotaries.

Beth pointed out that both the Longmeadow Historic District (the Green area) and the Longmeadow Street North Historic District are registered on the National Register of Historic Places (NR). They are also on the MHC database MACRIS, which Fuss & O'Neill probably searched as part of its due diligence. The Green is also a state local historic district; but the Longmeadow North Historic District is not a state local historic district. State local historic districts are subject to the rules of a local historic district commission (our HDC); NR properties are not. NR designation is prestigious, but really only helps protect when public funds are used in a project. Real protection comes through designation as a state local historic district.

Beth went on to point out that the description of the Northern Historic District is important to consider when determining the impact of this project.

(Link to the registration form approving the Longmeadow Street North-Historic District <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63795243>)

To paraphrase and loosely quote from that document - the roadway is distinguished by mature tree belts, large lots and generous setbacks that create a unified boulevard of well-preserved public buildings, old farmhouses and suburban residences. The street is the primary axis from which the 20th century suburban residential development spread. The historically significant South Park Terrace development which is in a setting designed by the Olmstead Firm is adjacent to the Northern Historic District. The Northern Historic District is the gateway for many visitors to our community and historically has been the entrance to town.

The Historic District Commission was in agreement that alterations to this area must be carefully considered in order to balance the need to address traffic congestion with the need to maintain the historic character of the town. Preserving the streetscape/landscape as much as possible should be one of the project's priorities. The Commission questioned if the project designers had considered if there are other ways to address the traffic congestion which might better preserve the landscape.

Chairperson Maggy Cohn will draft a letter in response thanking Fuss & O'Neill for including the Commission in the process. She will indicate that it is too early in the project design process for the Commission to make a final recommendation on the impact of the project to this area of historical significance. The Commission expects further information about the project to become available, perhaps at the upcoming public hearings which will be conducted by MASS DOT. Maggy will copy the Massachusetts Historical Commission on the letter of response to Fuss & O'Neill.

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Andy encouraged members of the Commission to visit his office to review project documents and ask questions. He suggested a call to the office first to make sure he is in.

Old Business - as Time permits

Old Train Station – Town Survey - no action

Building Demolition Delay – Language - no action

Historical District Commission – Bylaws

April 9 meeting for HDC to vote on new revised rules and regs. and design guidelines.

Report from the Historical Society

April 8 - Women Suffrage Program, April 13, 19, 23 - open houses at Storrs House

Community Preservation Commission – LHC application

All historical related applications were approved and will be on town meeting warrant.

Massachusetts Historical Commission – Survey and Planning Grant application

the matching grant was awarded!

Western Massachusetts Historical Commission Coalition – 3/20 meeting

Colony ‘Acres’ Trees vs. Sidewalks

Dave walked the area with Andy who agreed to change some of the sidewalks. Two trees will be removed when funds are available. At this time it is not clear if a process will be established for homeowners to grant easements for sidewalk deviation.

Records Storage at Storrs House

Commission members will review records to compile a catalog of information relating to structures falling under the demolition delay bylaws. This would be very helpful in responding to future challenges.

New Business

Any other New Business

Next Meeting, April 25, 2019

Adjourn 9:20