

HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

Minutes

March 8, 2016

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WATERBURY, CT  
16 MAR 10 PM 2:04  
TOWN CLERK  
MEST: *Edward A. Cooper*

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John O'Neill called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL

Present: John O'Neill, Eileen Olynciw, Debra Walters, & William Whelan.

Absent: Vivian Brooks & Fred Carlough (Alternate).

Also present: Municipal Historian Robert Nye & First Selectman Daniel Steward.

MINUTES

Motion by Whelan, seconded by Walters, to accept the minutes of the January 12, 2016 Regular Meeting & the minutes of the February 8, 2016 Special Meeting.

Voting in favor: Unanimous.

VACANCIES

All five Regular positions are filled. There are two Alternate vacancies. Nye's name has been submitted to the Board of Selectmen to fill one of the Alternate vacancies. Alternate Fred Carlough is in declining health and has not been able to attend meetings for more than a year.

TOWN HALL PROJECTS

Concerns raised in the commission's February 8 memo to the First Selectman were discussed with Mr. Steward. In the meantime RFPs had already been sent out and a "walk-through" conducted for the Town Hall window replacement project, the Town Hall west wall project, and the Hall of Records (Youth Service Bureau) renovations to the 1950s addition. Mr. Steward explained that he was under pressure from the Board of Finance to move ahead with the RFPs in spite of objections raised by the commission and the municipal historian to the window replacement project specifications. (A copy of the memo is attached to the minutes of the February 8 Special Meeting and is of record).

Regardless the window replacement project specifications, according to Mr. Steward, will be revisited and revised and/or added-to and/or amended to address commission concerns. Responding to concerns about a lack of transparency, he agreed to bring the historian and the commission "to the table" in further discussions.

Regarding the question of a Town Hall Building Committee Mr. Steward did not disagree that one could have been established. However, he gave no indication that one would be established.

A concern about job oversight was raised, citing the example of the contractor's complete disregard for the qualifications stipulated in the contract for the Town Hall entryway project. Yet the town accepted the shoddy work and the contractor was subsequently paid. A qualified project overseer/manager could have intervened and, in this case, terminated the contract. Mr. Steward noted that an engineer is on board for the west wall project and an architect for the window project. A question remains, however, whether the entryway project will be revisited.

Regarding the historic Nevins Tenant Cottage its future is not looking very bright. Costs associated with lead abatement and structural issues coupled with a yet undetermined use are contributing factors.

Nonetheless further ideas will be entertained including a possible lease arrangement, according to Mr. Steward.

Just prior to the meeting call to order Mr. Steward said that town employees will cut down the trees in the Wheeler Cemetery within the next few weeks. The \$2,000 neglected cemetery grant award will fund the project so long as the work is performed on a Saturday and not during the regular work week.

Having spent an hour with the commission Mr. Steward retired at 8:00 p.m. The commission much appreciated his taking the time out from his busy schedule and looks forward to a continuing open and transparent relationship.

#### CEMETERIES

Ms. Olynciw and Ms. Walters reported much progress inventorying and photographing neglected cemeteries. They hope to present their findings to the commission at the May meeting.

#### OIL MILL DISTRICT

With the inventory of the proposed nomination to the National Register long completed by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc., it appears that dysfunction in the State Historic Preservation Office seems to be the only reason why the nomination has yet to be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior.

#### JORDAN MILL FISHWAY

Educational marker(s) and "fish counter" still pending. Proposed state layoffs could further delay the project which is already 7 or 8 years behind schedule.

#### PRESERVATION MONTH (May)

Surveyor Gerald Stefon may be available for a presentation at the Library. Other ideas: Jordan School & cemeteries.

#### OTHER

There is a need for the HPC to take advantage of the Town's website and perhaps a link to Facebook. Someone has to pick up the ball, however.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Whelan, seconded by Walters, to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.  
Voting in favor: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert M. Nye  
Recording secretary