

Westport Historical Commission May 1, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Present:

Members: Bill Kendall, Janet Jones, Rud Lawrence, Jane Loos, Geraldine Millham, David Paddock

Alternates: Caroline Bolter, Beverly Schuch

Absent:

Members: Paul Somerson

Alternates: Ted Kinnari, Henry Swan

Others in Attendance:

Yvonne Barr, Chair Facilities Committee, Westport Historical Society (WHS)

Tony Connors, WHS President

Kit Wise, WHS Architect

Bill Kendall (BK) opened the meeting at 10:02 AM.

A. General Business

1. BK appointed Alternate Beverly Schuch (BS) as voting member to replace Paul Somerson.
2. Minutes of the April 3, 2017 Meeting. Geraldine Millham (GM) moved to approve the minutes as presented with one typo correction. Motion was seconded by Janet Jones (JJ). The vote in favor was unanimous with four abstentions as they had not attended that meeting (Rud Lawrence (RL), Jane Loos (JL), David Paddock (DP), and BS.
3. Treasurer's Report. GM presented the Treasurer's Report as of 4/27/17 (See attachment 1) RL moved and JJ seconded motion to approve the Report as presented. The vote in favor was unanimous.

B. Westport Historical Society

1. **Change of Plans for Handy House Utility Building.** Architect Kit Wise presented an explanation about why and how the the foundation was installed about 1 foot higher than what had been the level of the "foundation" of the former garage. This resulted in the height of the utility building relative to the Handy House to be raised by about 6 inches higher than the approved plans. He explained that this was done due to drainage considerations, without advance notice to WHC. He verified that this had not been caused by how the septic system had been installed. He confirmed that the site would be re-graded to balance out this increased height, and that such grading could be accomplished within the existing contour to the east edge of the property. WHC voted unanimously in favor of accepting this change.
2. WHC raised concerns about the unfortunate high visibility of the concrete foundation so close to the historic house. Kit Wise confirmed that building codes require an 8 inch reveal and suggested that one way of camouflaging the foundation exterior surface would be to parge it. WHC voted unanimously in favor of parging the foundation, with the color of the parging material to be a warm gray.

3. Kti Wise explained that the Facilities Committee had asked him to reconsider the choice of cement for the aprons at the several entries to the utility building. He offered several possible suggestions for WHC consideration, including granite cobbles, slabs of granite, blue stone, etc. Given the lack of details available about these options, BK informed that WHC could not make a determination at this meeting, and requested the new proposals with full information be submitted to WHC once the WHS Facilities Committee had made its selection.. BK also asked for the choice of materials for the toilet north entry be reconsidered and integrated with the gravel path that would lead to those doors, as well reconsidering possible alternatives for the new driveway entry to the new parking area as it entered from Hix Bridge Road.

4. Kit Wise informed that the Facilities Committee was undecided about the two sliding barn doors on the east elevation. He also noted that if the sliding doors were eliminated, that would reduce the usefulness of the proposed 12 foot wide driveway along the side of the building. WHC members noted that eliminating the driveway along side the building could result in a re-designed layout to recreate the previous turn-around for delivery vehicles so that they could exit facing forward out onto Drift Road. WHC approved unanimously the elimination of the sliding doors on the east elevation and asked that a revised siteplan for the driveway/turnaround be submitted for WHC review.

5. BK informed that Jenny O'Neill, Executive Director had forwarded a substantial report on the condition of the interior of the Handy House along with some suggestions for restoration and preservation. Copies of that report had been forwarded to WHC members over the weekend , but there was therefore no time to digest this material and give it due consideration at this meeting. BK confirmed that the Handy House Subcommittee would take these matters into consideration and consult directly with Ms. O'Neill.

6. BK also confirmed that all matters concerning WHS that required WHC approvals be presented to it at least two weeks in advance of its next regularly scheduled meeting .

C. Monitors Reports.

1. 1813-1815 Main Road - RL informed that the "unapproved" windows were still in place, and that shingling had been proceeding in fits and starts, but now seemed stopped.

2. Lees Market - JJ informed that Mr. Fennelly was still waiting for the signs to be prepared by Signature Signs. JL suggested that it may be prudent to take the samples of the approved color scheme to check the signs before they are completed and delivered.

3. 1835 Main Road - CB informed that a dumpster has been delivered, but that only interior work is underway at this time.

4. 1874 Main Road - JL informed that this property will go to auction on May 5, 2017 and that WHC had sent a letter to the auctioneer and the Westport Credit Union (holder of the mortgage) asking them to revise their advertisement and to inform those attending the auction that this property is in the historic district and subject to WHC oversight.

D. Other Business

1. WHALE Preservation Award. GM informed that Officer John Bell had been selected to receive the WHALE Sara Delano award for his work in restoring the Powder House. (Attachment

2). JJ undertook to make this known to the CPC (which had guided this project through to CPA funding) The Board of Selectmen and other Town Officials should be pleased to learn about recognition of Westport's historic preservation efforts. GM undertook to share this information with Shorelines .

2. Cell Tower, 248 Fisher Road. The meeting discussed what should be the basic principles underpinning WHC stance when considering projects that receive federal funding and which, under the National Historic Preservation Act, must seek the views of the local and state historic authorities. It was agreed that the WHC stance should be that, to be acceptable, a proposed project should not (1) be visible from historic sites, and (2) impinge on the historic context of the area. The meeting agreed that this proposed cell tower would not be visible from the nearby historic cemetery, and therefore WHC could inform that it had no objections.

3. Assignments. The following assignments were confirmed:

CPC delegate, JJ with CB as understudy to start learning about this important town-wide committee

Handy House Subcommittee - BK, GM, RK

Oscar Palmer Farm Subcommittee - GM,BK, JJ, CB

Town Farm Subcommittee - GM, RL, BK

3. Updated Guidelines. RL introduced the proposed revisions to the guidelines, with two variations — with and without the proposed By-Law change. BK advised that it would be necessary for WHC to work expeditiously on the guidelines in time to have something ready for the summer Westport Point Neighborhood Association meeting, and requested that all WHC members/ alternates review the proposed guidelines and provide comments to RL in advance of the next meeting where WHC should take a formal decision about how to proceed..

4. Next Meeting. BK informed that the next meeting will be on Monday June 5, at 10AM. The meeting time would be changed to 6pm on that date if WHC must hold a public hearing. BK undertook to inform WHC members/alternates if WHC receives an application requiring a public hearing (deadline for submission, about two weeks in advance of the regularly scheduled meeting).

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Draft prepared by JLoos, approved June 5, 2017

Attachments:

1. Treasurer's Report
2. WHALE Preservation Award for Powder House