Hopedale Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 5, 2017

Little Red Shop Museum

12 Hopedale Street, Hopedale, Massachusetts

**Present:** Jonathan Chase, Co-Chairman; Raymond Andreotti, Treasurer; Suzan Ciaramicoli, Co-Chairman and Recording Secretary; Barbara Kochon; Fred Oldfield

 **Absent:** Kelly Merchant

The meeting was called to order, by Co-Chairman Jonathan Chase at 7:04 p.m.

The **Minutes of the December 7, 2016 HHC meeting**, prepared by Sue Ciaramicoli, were emailed to members of the HHC on 1/5/17 at 6:32 p.m. Sue also brought a copy to the meeting for review. A motion was made by Fred Oldfield and seconded by Jonathan Chase, to accept the Meeting Minutes as emailed at that time. Jonathan asked if there needed to be any further discussion about the last meeting’s minutes. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Ray Andreotti

**December expenses**

Eversource - $112.74 (12/29)

National Grid - $121.21 (12/9)

Comcast - $95.51 (12/10)

Verizon - $12.96 (12/6)

**BHC Partnership Grant – Cataloging Project** – Sue made a request to be reimbursed for purchases made as part of the BHC Partnership Grant totaling $2,188.01. The Historical Commission will be reimbursed for these purchases, as well as for $401.88 in purchases made at the end of this last fiscal year. We already received a reimbursement for loom storage totaling $1,170.

A motion was made by Fred Oldfield and seconded by Ray Andreotti, to accept the reimbursement request as presented. Jonathan asked if there needed to be any further discussion about the reimbursement request. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

 Sue requested that all members of the HHC (present this evening) sign the Schedule of Bills Payable for this reimbursement as she now works in the Accounting Office and is responsible for processing payments on behalf of the Town of Hopedale. The form for reimbursement was signed by Jonathan Chase, Ray Andreotti, Barbara Kochon, and Fred Oldfield.

Sue reported that she had spent probably about 20 hours selecting and making the final purchases on 12/29 and 12/31 in accordance with the budget submitted to the BHC back in March 2016. She also spent at least another 10 hours drafting the reimbursement request, preparing the spreadsheet detailing the purchases, and securing proper purchase and payment backup in support of the reimbursement request. Sue will subsequently draft the Partnership Grant Final Report and prepare the detailed backup that will be submitted with the Report to Deputy Superintendent, Megan DiPrete, of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor. This level of detail and attention to detail is especially important due to the issuance of federal funds for the purchases.

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Order numbers/invoices, and providing proof of reimbursement are required. In addition to the Final Report, this will entail preparation of the final spreadsheet detailing all purchases with corresponding attachments supporting the purchases and donations. This level of detail is also critical in order for the Town Accountant to approve the reimbursement to Sue in anticipation of reimbursement from the Blackstone Heritage Corridor. Sue plans to prepare and submit a draft of the final report to Megan prior to delivering the final package.

**Senior (Citizen) Property Tax Relief Work Program** - Sue reported that Carole Mullen, Director of the Council on Aging, inquired as to whether we might be able to utilize the services of a senior citizen worker at the Museum as part of the Senior Property Tax Relief Work Program. The Senior Citizen worker can work up to 91 hours, now through the end of this November, to receive a credit of $1,000 towards their annual real estate tax bill. Sue agreed that we will be able to utilize such a Senior Citizen worker when the Museum is open and on many tasks related to the Cataloging Project.

**Curator’s Report** - Sue had nothing “Museum specific” to report due to the amount of time spent on the finalization of the Partnership Grant, and to the holidays.

**Local Historic District Study Committee** – Although having the best of intentions, Sue reported that there was no progress this month due to the holidays, and particularly due to the many hours (30+) required to wrap up the Partnership Grant purchases, report and paperwork. She did not reach out to the known potential nominees, nor did she schedule a meeting to meet with them.

Barbara Kochon shared her concern that we should be able to provide potential LHDSC candidates with more specifics as to the probable monthly commitment and probable total Project commitment (“time to annual meeting”). Chris Skelly, MHC, shared that the formation of a LHD usually takes about 18 months. It was also suggested that the LHDSC should meet at least once a month for a couple of hours, supplemented by additional working meetings for specific tasks. This monthly commitment would likely be dictated by the Committee itself and their level of commitment to the task at hand.

The Commission revisited the topic of what “should and shouldn’t” be included in a local historic district. It was reiterated that properties should not be “cherry picked” based on whether they are historic or not. The goal of establishing a historic district is to preserve the character and fabric of certain areas and/or neighborhoods. Sue will provide some documentation from a meeting held with another community who has already gone through the LHD process.

A motion was made by Barbara Kochon and seconded by Ray Andreotti for the meeting to adjourn at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Sue Ciaramicoli, HHC Co-Chair and Recording Secretary

Attachment – Excerpt from the HHC Minutes of June 1, 2016 regarding LHD

**Excerpt from the HHC Meeting Minutes - June 1, 2016**

**Guests’ Topic of Discussion: Local Historic District (LHD)**

An invitation to come to our June meeting, to share their experience about local historic districts, was accepted by Michael Roughan, Chair, and Claire Wright, Vice Chair of the Hopkinton Historical Commission. Claire is also the Chair of one of their Local Historic Districts. Also attending was one of their colleagues, Nancy Stevenson.

* Hopkinton has two LHDs – their downtown and Woodville. The regulations are more lenient in the Woodville LHD because the priority was to “save” the structures rather than to focus on such things as paint color.
* The Local Historic District Study Committee (LHDSC) is appointed by the Board of Selectmen (BOS).
* Residents wanting to make changes within the LHD need to obtain a “certificate of appropriateness” from the LHD.
* The Demolition Delay Law is critical to historical preservation.
* The goal is retain the architectural features of existing structures; so as to continue an appearance “in keeping with” the LHD.
* Need to recruit “allies” within the proposed LHD; including any businesses.
* Hold several “little meetings” to build interest and support within the Town.
* The objective is to make sure that houses “stay.”
* Historic preservation restrictions are governed by the LHDC. The LHDC exists to govern any permanent changes made to structures in the LHD.
* Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds are very helpful in providing the funds needed for historic preservation. The Town of Mendon has CPA funding through its tax base.
* Another goal is to keep from “losing the historic fabric” of the LHD. It is the concept of maintaining “streetscapes” and the “fabric” that tells the story.
* Need to be able to justify why properties within the proposed LHD are important.
* It was suggested to check with Somerville and Arlington about grant opportunities.

Jennifer Smith shared that the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park is made up of 4 mill villages, Slater Mill and the Blackstone River State Park. The four nodes in Rhode Island are much further along than Hopedale and Whitinsville in the LHD process. Ashton and Slatersville already had LHDs.

The mission of the NPS is to enforce the standard of historical preservation as outlined by the Secretary of the Interior as we “tell the industrial story” of the BRVNHP.

What’s the “carrot” for funding? Jennifer suggests:

* “Think BIG”
* Best for a LHD to be contiguous
* We need to think of the “***visitor experience***!”
* Need to get the local media involved.
* Preferable to include “mill housing.”
* Need to get local folks interested in preserving the historical character of the proposed LHD.