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Amesbury Historical Commission
Town Hall • Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

Amesbury Historical Commission (AHC) Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: August 1, 2024

Location: Amesbury Council on Aging Senior Center, 68 Elm Street, Amesbury, MA

Commissioners Present: Joe Finn, Chair, Chris Akelian, Steve Klomps, Malcom Rutter

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM.

The minutes for the May 2, 2024 meeting were submitted for review. Steve recommended two changes. Malcolm motioned to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Steve. Passed 4 to 0.

Old Business:

- Demolition Application for 230 Main Street: Robert L. Zeraschi, the owner of the property, was in attendance. The AHC reviewed the Demolition Package submitted by the owner. Joe stated that the package meets the bylaw requirements. He said that it does not provide a detailed description of the property, but that is not a requirement. Steve mentioned that an updated MACRIS Form AME.200 for the property has been posted on the Massachusetts Historical Commission website. This form contains a detailed architectural and historical description of the property. There was no further discussion on the demolition package.

It was discussed that the public hearing for this property should be scheduled for the next meeting of the Amesbury Historical Commission. Accordingly, Steve motioned to designate the meeting of September 5, 2024, starting at 7 pm, as the public hearing for 230 Main Street. The motion was seconded by Malcolm, and was passed 4 to 0. Robert L. Zeraschi then left the meeting.

New Business:

- Emergency demolition at 201 Elm Street: Joe reported that he was contacted by Greg Southard who recently purchased the property at 201 Elm Street, regarding two ancillary structures attached to the main house that were in a serious state of disrepair. The roof of a small shed addition at the rear of the house had collapsed, exposing various old building materials that had been stored inside. There was also a side entrance porch attached to the east side of the rear structure that was failing. Greg reviewed these issues on site with the building inspector who deemed them unsafe, and separately with Joe Finn of the AHC, who

conferred with the building inspector by phone and agreed to the emergency demolition of these additions. Joe also mentioned that there was a newer structure, under 75 years old and not attached to the house, that was also demolished.

Joe stated that any further demolition at 201 Elm Street would be subject to the full requirements of the demolition delay bylaw. He also stated that Greg Southard will be coming before AHC in the future to seek designation of the property at 201 Elm Street as historically significant, so that he can develop the property under the Historic Preservation Special Permit Bylaw.

Chris inquired if AHC can have input on external materials used in carrying out renovations under the Historical Preservation Special Permit Bylaw. Joe responded that AHC does have input on the materials that can be used. A brief discussion ensued.

- Amendment to the Historical Preservation Special Permit Bylaw: Nick Cracknell, Director of Community and Economic Development for Amesbury, was in attendance and reported that an amendment to the existing bylaw to make it applicable to commercial zones in Amesbury has been submitted to the City Council. The City Council referred the amendment to a subcommittee for consideration in September. He also reported that the Planning Board at their meeting held on July 29 voted to send a formal letter of support for the amendment to the City Council. Nick suggested that AHC members individually visit and review past Historical Preservation Special Permit projects approved to see how they have worked out. Nick feels that they have had very positive results for Amesbury.
- Joe reported that the AHC was copied on a letter dated July 15, 2024, from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding the receipt of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the proposed project by Golden Triangle Residential Development on Elm Street (265R, 277, 281, 287 ½, 287 Elm) in Amesbury. The proposed project consists of the construction of a 375-unit residential development and the demolition of the house at 287 Elm Street, historically known as the J. S. True House, included in the Inventory of Historic Resources (AME.306). Steve noted that the AHC, when addressing a proposed development of the property several years ago, reviewed the True House at 287 Elm Street and determined it to be historically significant.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectively submitted,
Steve Klomps