



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

Amesbury Historical Commission (AHC) Meetings Minutes

Meeting Date: May 2, 2024

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

Commissioners Present: Joe Finn, Chair, Chris Akelian, Dick Joltes, Steve Klomps, Malcolm Rutter, Jay Williamson

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM

1. Roll call – all members present.
2. Meeting Minutes for March 14, 2024 were submitted by Steve Klomps for review.
 - a. Malcolm made a motion to accept the March 14, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted which was seconded by Dick. The motion was passed by a vote of 5-0.
3. 230 Main Street – Demolition application. (Listed in MACRIS AME.200)
 - a. Joe explained the process for demolition applications to attendees.
 - i. First meeting is to decide whether the structure is historically significant.
 - ii. If NO, then Amesbury Historical Commission notifies the building inspector to proceed as appropriate.
 - iii. If YES, there would be a follow-up meeting to review the applicant's demolition packet within 60 days. Other steps: notify abutters, place a notification in the newspaper for the public and have a public meeting to determine if the structure should be razed or preferably preserved.
 - iv. The topic for tonight is strictly whether the structure is historically significant.
 - b. There are 3 structures on 230 Main Street which may make it complicated to determine historic significance.
 - c. The property IS included in inventory of historically significant structures in Amesbury and MACRIS – Form AME.200 – as the Currier - Bagley - Huntington House also later known as Society of Friends Homeless Shelter.
 - d. It is Georgian with a Queen Anne portion connected to it.
 - e. Some facts about the property:
 - i. Early Georgian portion built by Colby Family circa 1710-1730.
 - ii. Daniel Currier purchased it in 1745 from Thomas Colby and took down the Georgian structure to put up the current structure.
 - iii. The Victorian portion was built circa 1914-1915.

- iv. Huntington heir donated the property to the Society of Friends and it was used as a homeless shelter.
 - v. There is a large ell in the back.
 - f. Steve Klomps recommends a site visit by the Amesbury Historical Commission to inspect the structures as there is the possibility that not all 3 structures are historically significant so the commission would need to be better informed to make a more accurate determination.
 - g. Attorney for the applicant Paul Gagliardi – “It makes sense to do a site visit. I will discuss with the applicant. They are available most mornings and will accommodate the commission. Next week is preferable due to scheduling.”
 - h. The applicant and the commission will target the following week, the week of May 6th, for the site visit. Joe Finn will be in touch with Paul Gagliardi to determine a date and time for the site visit.
 - i. Vinney Tirone from the office of Amesbury Inspectional Services asks: “Can we determine a date for the public to be able to attend the follow-up meeting.”
 - j. The applicant states that there is concern about the structural integrity of the building and having too many people in the structure.
 - k. Nick Cracknell, Director of Community and Economic Development for Amesbury suggests setting a date for the next public meeting. The site visit is not a public meeting so he recommends only commission members attend.
 - l. A tentative date for a public meeting was set for Thursday May 23, 2024 7:00PM.
 - m. Janet Denoulis (?), residing at 96 High Street asks if there will be an opportunity for public comment.
 - n. Joe Finn explains that the next meeting will be to determine whether the structure is historically significant. The applicant will then have 65 days to submit a demolition package. 90 days after that will be a public meeting to give the public the opportunity to submit comments. If the structure is historically significant and the applicant wishes to proceed the commission can impose a demolition delay of 18 months.
 - o. Nick Wheeler from 161 Whitehall Road asks a procedural question. When the School building committee had a meeting in the past, the entire community was present. The meeting was made public but not all members of the committee went into the structure at the same time to abide by open meeting laws.
 - p. Steve Klomps made a motion to continue the demolition application on 230 Main Street to the 5/23/2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dick Joltes.
 - q. The commission voted 5-0 all in favor.
4. 120 Main Street – Saint James Episcopal Church (Listed in MACRIS AME.91 as 114 Main Street)
- a. Present were: Rev. John Satula, Beth Mauch and Lauren Younes
 - b. St James is a 178-member congregation and they are starting the process of getting a historical landmark designation.
 - c. The structure is 125 years old and there is deterioration of masonry and damage from a fire in 2000 for which they are getting repair quotes. They are working on getting historic preservation grants to help with repair costs.
 - d. The original wooden structure received its charter on October 8, 1833, burned down in 1899, was rebuilt and the current building was consecrated on May 7, 1903. It is in the late 19th century Gothic Revival style

- e. The church has a connection to Rev. Benjamin Dorr, rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia during the American Civil War. Rev. Dorr was born in Salisbury MA in 1796. He died in 1869 after thirty-two years as rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia. His body was returned to Massachusetts and interred at Salisbury Point Burial Ground in Amesbury. Reverend Dorr was both a friend and benefactor of St. James Episcopal Church in Amesbury.
 - f. William F. Quigley, Jr, history teacher at The Governor's Academy in Byfield, MA discusses Rev Dorr and his son William White Dorr, who served as a Captain in the 121st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War, and was killed in action at the Battle of Spotsylvania, Virginia. He is buried in the Salisbury Point Village Cemetery, Salisbury Point, Massachusetts.
 - g. The Massachusetts Historical designation likes to see support from the local historical commissions. The Amesbury Historical Commission would be supportive. What criteria would they be looking at?
 - h. The recently passed Community Preservation Act could be a source for funding.
 - i. Possibility of including connection to past rector Rev. Daniel Gordon Estes, husband to Hannah Moody Estes, as a historical connection.
 - j. How do you apply to the process of historical designation. The first step is tonight to present to the commission, then you come back.
 - k. Meghan Fahey, archivist at the Amesbury Public Library – Form B, would commission be willing to support an update to this form as it is currently more than 25 years old?
 - l. No further comments. This item is closed at this time.
5. Amesbury Public Library - (Listed in MACRIS AME.23)
- a. Meghan Fahey - Mass Historic has evaluated the Amesbury Library and they think they should be able to go forward with a national historical landmark designation.
 - b. Meghan again – Library qualifies as a nationally significant landmark because it is a local historically significant landmark.
6. Jay Williamson, commission member – 140 Main Street, Methodist Church
- a. Status of doors facing Nayson's Court.
 - b. He contacted Lisa Meade, attorney for the client, by email regarding the side doors. The doors did not meet the agreed upon design criteria with the Amesbury Historical Commission.
 - c. The front doors are red in color and have a sunburst design motif but the side doors do not. The contractor had agreed to replicate the design of the front doors to the side doors but did not
7. A motion to adjourn is made by Dick Joltes and seconded by Steve Klomps.
- a. Vote is 5-0 all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectively submitted,
Chris Akelian