

SOUTHBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

July 18, 2019 7:00 PM

Evelyn A. Petrelli Room, Southbridge Town Hall

1. **Call to order:** The Southbridge Historical Commission (SHC) met on Thursday, July 18, 2019 in the Evelyn A. Petrelli Room of the Southbridge Town Hall. The SHC meeting was called to order by Secretary Amanda Richards at 7:11 p.m. This was due to the Acting Chairman Wm. Casey Jolin being absent from the meeting. In addition to Amanda, present at the meeting were Helen Boyle, Linda Langevin-Zonia, Helen Lenti, and Arthur Martin. Unfortunately due to Fred Morin's term on the SHC expiring on June 30th, 2019 and no renewal for another 3 years was requested, Fred is longer a voting member on the SHC.
2. **Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2019:** The meeting minutes for the June 27, 2019 meeting were read. Much discussion was held regarding agenda items discussed during that meeting.

There was a discussion regarding the old weigh station on Foster Street. Amanda asked Helen B. if she knew if the Center of Hope owned the building, in which Helen B. said that indeed the Center of Hope owned the building and much of the property behind it, all the way to the rail road tracks. She explained that the Center of Hope bought the property two years ago.

Helen B. explained that the Trustees Committee has been discussing putting all the WWI monuments in one location, which would be at Elm Street Park. She said that Councilor Adams wants to do more research as to why the other WWI monuments located throughout the town, are placed at their present locations, before the Committee makes any decisions about moving them. Helen B. also said that the proposal that the Boy Scouts had presented to the Trustees Committee and the DPW regarding flower beds being installed at Elm Street Park, was approved.

Once all discussions ended regarding the agenda items from the June 27th meeting, Arthur made a motion to accept the meeting minutes with corrections. Helen B. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

3. **Treasurer's Report:** Helen L. provided copies of the voucher that she submitted to the Town's Accounting Office, which was a bill from Staples that Amanda had submitted to be reimbursed for office supplies. The bill was for \$153.00. Amanda had not been reimbursed as of yet, but would let Helen L. know once she was.

Helen L. reported that there wasn't anything in the SHC's mailbox from the Town Accountant's office and wasn't sure how much the SHC had in its FY 2020 budget. Linda said that she would go and speak with Karen Harnois, the Town Accountant and/or her secretary, to see how much the SHC has in its budgets.

4. **Applications from the Public:** The SHC did not have any applications from the public.

5. **Correspondence:** The SHC received a flyer advertising two performances for the Southbridge Concerts on the Common Series, taking place at the Town Common. One was for a hip hop performance group, *Trend N Motion*, scheduled for July 26th, 6-8 pm. The second was *Edwin Pabon's Salsa Band* scheduled for August 16; from 6-8 pm. Helen B. said that instead of having concerts on Sunday evenings, like they had been done in years past, they would instead be held on Friday nights, allowing for more people to attend.
6. **Discussion of Historical Commission Bylaws and Cover Letter:** Amanda provided members with copies of the cover letter she had written up on behalf of the SHC, addressed to Christopher Skelly, who works for the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The cover letter asks for Mr. Skelly's input and advice regarding the Demolition Delay Bylaws the SHC wrote, before they can be reviewed and accepted by the Town Council. A few corrections were made to the letter, in which Amanda said she would correct and have the letter ready for the next meeting, so members could sign it.

Linda said that she would put the names of SHC's current members at the end of the bylaws, without titles, due to members' positions within the SHC possibly changing. Linda asked members what format (mail or email) the SHC should use to send them to Mr. Skelly. Amanda said that while doing research on submitting paperwork to the MHC, she read that that any forms and paperwork that is submitted to the MHC should be done by mail and not email. Linda said that the SHC can officially read the bylaws as a whole and mail them out right after the SHC's August meeting. Helen L. stated that Casey would need to be present at the next SHC meeting in August in order to sign off on the letter.

Linda then read the Demolition Delay Bylaws. The SHC removed wording in the second paragraph under "ENFORCEMENT AND REMEDIES". The third line of the third sentence had the following words removed, "not more than". The SHC added a sentence under the same section, at the end of the third paragraph. The following sentence was added: "If the property changes ownership after demolition, no building permit shall be issued for an additional period of 2 years." The date on the last page was changed from June 2019 to August 2019. The title "Acting Chairman" next to William C. Jolin was removed and "Fred Morin Chairman" was removed.

Amanda thanked Linda for working on gathering information and typing up the Demolition Delay Bylaws for the SHC. Linda said that when the SHC presents the bylaws to the subcommittee, once they come back from Boston and are revised, the SHC should present them with pictures of various locations within town including areas where historic properties once stood. All SHC members agreed with this idea. Arthur said that pictures of the building that once stood on Main Street that was destroyed by fire in Aug. of 2016 could be included. Amanda and Helen B. said that they had copies of that event that the SHC could use.

7. **Discussion of Letter for Ashland Ave/Quinebaug River Bank Stabilization Project:**
Both Arthur and Amanda stated that there was a Conservation Commission meeting taking place that evening at the Town Hall, where the Ashland Ave/Quinebaug River Bank

Stabilization Project was being presented by MassDOT to the Conservation Commission. Arthur also explained that there was a public hearing scheduled for Thursday, July 25, 2019 at 6:30 pm in the Veteran's Conference Room, regarding the project. SHC members said that they would try to attend the meeting in order to get more information regarding the project.

Amanda then presented and read the three letters she wrote on behalf of the SHC in regards to their support of the project. The first one was addressed to Michael R. Gagnon from the engineering company Milone & MacBroom, Inc. who will be doing the project. The second letter was addressed to Jeffrey Shrimpton, the MassDOT Cultural Resource Officer. The third letter was addressed to Brona Simon, the State Historic Preservation Officer from the MHC. All SHC members in attendance approved of and signed all three letters.

Amanda explained that she wrote the three letters and c.c.'d the following people: Ron San Angelo, the Town Manager; Heather Blakely, Town of Southbridge DPW Director; Rosemary Scrivens, Director of Economic Development and Planning; Southbridge Conservation Commission; and Southbridge Planning Board; in order for everyone, including Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Shrimpton, and Ms. Simon, to know what position the SHC had regarding the project and know who received what letters. SHC members said that it was good to c.c. everyone so there wouldn't be any questions about who received what letters and what the SHC wrote to all three individuals, allowing for transparency.

Since Casey was not at the meeting, he could not sign off on the letters. Since the letters were time sensitive and needed to be mailed out as soon as possible, Helen L. said that she would take all the letters to Casey within the next week and have him sign off on them. She would then give them back to Amanda so she could mail them out. Amanda thanked Helen L. for doing that.

8. **Review of MASS. Preservation Manual:** Amanda made a motion to postpone the Review of the Mass. Preservation Manual. Helen L. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.
9. **Special Projects:**
 - a. **Neighborhood Signs**
 - b. **Pictures of Homes on National Historic Registry**
 - c. **Evelyn A. Petrelli Room Dedication**
 - d. **Central Street Kiosk/Map**

Amanda made a motion to postpone the discussion of agenda items 9a, 9b, 9c, and 9d. Helen B. seconded the motion. Arthur stated that he did not want to see agenda item **9c. Evelyn A. Petrelli Room Dedication** pushed off too much longer. Linda said that she would give Yvonne the map that Amanda had drawn, to Joel so he could put up the various artifacts the SHC had, in the room. After some discussion, members agreed to have Joel work on

Evelyn's wall first with her picture, room plaque and banner. The final location for the other artifacts could be determined at another time.

Once all discussion ended regarding agenda item 9c. Amanda made a motion to postpone the discussion of agenda items 9a, 9b and 9d. It was seconded by Helen B. All were in favor and motion passed.

Linda then asked Amanda if she could email Rosemary Scrivens and Peg Dean and invite them to the next meeting in order to discuss a few projects and topics going on in town that the SHC has questions about. Linda wanted to make sure that the SHC had the most current information regarding those various projects, especially the Central Street Parking Lot project and kiosk. She couldn't see the SHC working on the kiosk and map, if there wasn't going to be room for it. Amanda said that she would email them.

10. **New Business:** Amanda presented the SHC with a letter she had written on behalf of the SHC in regards to the Southbridge Credit Union's new proposed bank branch, which would be located on Main Street. The letter thanked Mr. Neil Dixon, the architect, Ms. Kate Alexander and Mr. Jeff Canniff for meeting with the SHC to discuss the project and also for providing the SHC with new site plans. The letter also included the SHC's suggestion of the color grey for the building. All SHC members in attendance approved of and signed the letter. Helen L. said that she would bring the letter to Casey to sign.

Helen B. said that she was able to get in contact with Jeff Canniff from the Southbridge Credit Union and scheduled a time to walk through and take pictures of the barn located on the Southbridge Credit Union's property on Main Street. The barn is being considered for demolition so a new bank branch can be built on that site. Helen B. said that she would be going the following day (July 19th) at 11:00 a.m. and invited other Historical Commission members to join her. Both Linda and Helen L. said that they would meet Helen B. at 11:00 to go on the walkthrough. Arthur said that he would try to see if he could make it. Amanda said that she would not be able to attend, but asked Helen B. to send whatever photos she takes of the barn to her. She can have copies made and then place them in the SHC's photo album. Helen B. said she would send her photos of the barn.

Amanda then read the "Letter to the Editor" letter, which was written in order to submit to *The Southbridge Evening News*, *The Telegram and Gazette*, and *The Citizen Chronicle*, regarding the demolition of a historic home demolished two months prior and explaining what the SHC's mission is in addition to what the SHC is currently doing (Demolition Delay Bylaws). There was much discussion regarding the letter. After discussing that the SHC had received many inquiries from the public regarding the demolition, the SHC members decided that the letter should be published, helping to give light to the situation and hopefully answer many questions the Commission received in the last two months. Arthur made a motion to accept the letter. Helen B. seconded the motion. Five were in favor, one absent. Motion passed. The SHC decided to send it out within the following week to all three news outlets.

Helen B. then asked what was going on with The Vienna (14 South Street), due to the building looking as if it isn't being taken care of. The windows are still broken and the siding is unsightly, which was caused by a fire, which occurred at the property in November of 2017. She wondered if someone had bought it. SHC members said that they would ask Rosemary Scrivens, the Economic Development and Planning Director, to see if she knows if anyone has purchased it and if so what the plan are in order to fix it up.

11. **Commissioner's Forum**: Amanda said that upon coming to that evening's meeting she noticed that the bottom step to the entrance of the side door at the Town Hall was fixed and re-cemented. She said that it looked very nice and the curved angle of the step was kept. Helen L. was happy to hear the news of it being fixed since it had been crumbling and eroding away for a few years.

The next SHC meeting date was discussed for August 15, 2019. Amanda said that she would email both Rosemary Scrivens and Peg Dean and invite them to the next meeting in order to discuss a few projects and topics going on in town that the SHC had questions about (i.e./ AO zoning, The Vienna Inn, Sacred Heart Church property plans, Fire Station proposed site, and Central Street Parking Lot and kiosk).

Commission members asked Amanda what they could do in order to help her out with what the SHC needs to do. Amanda said that if members could go out and do research and find out information for her when she writes letters, it would help her out tremendously. She thanked the SHC members for all that they have been doing in order to get information for the SHC to use, like Demolition Delay Bylaws, meeting with business owners and taking photographs of various historic locations throughout town.

Linda said that she would start checking the SHC's mail periodically for the month, so the SHC isn't bombarded with mail before the next SHC meeting in August and can prepare if need be. Amanda thanked Linda for checking the mail.

Helen B. said that she would contact Bay Path High School (Charlton, MA) and talk with them about creating historical signs/kiosk for the SHC. Linda suggested that Helen B. take photos of the downtown historical signs in Sturbridge and see if Bay Path could create similar styled signs for Southbridge. Helen B. said that she would see what Bay Path says.

Helen L. said that she would take the letters that the SHC signed that evening, to Casey to sign so they can be given back to Amanda within the week and mailed out. Amanda thanked them all.

12. **Adjournment**: A motion was made by Linda and seconded by Amanda to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 10:14 pm.

Submitted by:

Amanda V. Richards, Secretary

