

MINUTES: Norwell Historical Commission, Monday, September 10, 2018

PRESENT: Bob Norris, Trish Shepherd, Jim Kelliher, Nancy McBride, Janet Watson

ABSENT: Noel Ripley, David DeGhettto

ALSO ATTENDING: Ellen Allen, Selectman, Denise and Jim Laiosa, Gary Thomas, attorney who is representing the Liaosas regarding the PRA.

Bob Norris chaired the meeting in the absence of Noel Ripley. The meeting was called to order at 7:19 PM. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the agenda as amended to correct the date of the next meeting. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes from August.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bills for this month are:

Account #81-000-7065-5780 (JFH Income)

Verizon	\$47.91	telephone
National Grid	\$34.39	electricity
Total	\$82.30	

Payment of invoices was unanimously approved. Trish looked into concerns about why electricity usage increased in the summer and determined that it was due to powering the pump which provides water to Norwell Farms.

NORWELL GRANGE PRESERVATION RESTRICTION AGREEMENT

Ellen Allen discussed the current version of the Preservation Agreement for the Grange that has been approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The MHC made several changes to the version submitted by the town. The current version requires prior review and approval by the Historical Commission to most changes to the exterior, the interior and the grounds while the original version focused on the exterior of the building only. Jim Kelliher noted that the current version uses the term "public hall" and wondered if that meant that interior changes to room configuration were not permitted. The agreement goes on to emphasize the appearance of the exterior of the building and states that approval cannot be "unreasonably withheld." Ultimately it appears that authority for decisions about changes to the interior are under the discretion of the NHC. Ellen explained that the only condition the BOS has imposed regarding the interior is that the building cannot be used for a residential property. That condition is one of the terms under which the Board of Selectman agreed to relinquish their right of refusal. The Board of Selectmen and the Commission have to sign the current version and send it back to the MHC.

The Laiosas have not yet signed the preservation restriction agreement or purchased the property and want to have a general idea of whether their proposed renovations will be acceptable to the Commission prior to going forward so that they are sure they can afford to undertake the project. The Lioasas brought a list of detailed questions regarding acceptable materials and a sketch of the proposed addition. They are reluctant to go to the expense of getting an architectural plan until they have a better understanding of what materials they can use. Bob Norris and others explained that the NHC attempts to work with building owners and does not generally require specific use of woods and materials that match the originals as long as it does not affect the external appearance. Janet clarified that the Laiosas plan to repair the original windows in the existing building and use new windows of the same appearance in the new addition. Jim Kelliher made the point that because this is a preservation agreement there is a higher standard than we have for home owners who are renovating their properties.

After a long discussion, it was agreed that the NHC would attend the BOS meeting on Wednesday, September 19 to vote on approval of the PRA. The Commission agreed to review the information and questions submitted by the Laiosas and provide answers to the questions at our next meeting on October 1. Trish will make sure that David and Noel have the packet of information provided by the Laiosas.

NORWELL FARMS SUB-LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH CROSS STREET FLOWERS

Ellen explained that due to Federal tax regulations Cross Street Flowers has to be a sub-licensee of Norwell Farms and that the sub-license agreement has to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Conservation Commission and the Historical Commission. Ellen clarified that the agreement does not change any arrangements made with Norwell Farms about the use of out-buildings and Norwell Farms continues to be responsible for their use. A motion to approve the sub-license agreement was made, seconded and unanimously approved. As acting chairman, Bob Norris signed the agreement.

JACOBS FARMHOUSE TBA CONTRACT

Due to the late hour, the discussion of the TBA contract was deferred and it will be jointly discussed with the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on September 19.

JAMES LIBRARY UPDATE

Jim reported that things are rapidly moving forward with the James Library renovations. The rear addition and elevator shaft have been framed and interior work is being completed. The library will be closed while interior construction is being done due to hazardous conditions but Jim anticipates that the library will back in operation in a month.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM.

The Commission will meet with the Board of Selectmen on Wednesday, September 19. Ellen will send out a notice with the times.

The next regular NHC meeting will be Monday, October 1.