

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Subject to review and approval

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 6:45 PM

Manager's Conference Room- City Hall, 39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Commission Members Present: Eric Gilbertson (Chair), Bob McCullough, Jenna Lapachinski (via phone), Lily Fournier (student representative), Jamie Duggan (arrived after start of meeting)

Commission Members Absent: Liz Peebles

Others Present: Meredith Crandall (staff), Joe Strain (nominee for open HPC seat), Jay Ancel (Black River Design), Mike Miller (Montpelier Planning Director)

Call to Order

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order by Chair Gilbertson

Public Comments

None.

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Gilbertson requested adding 5 Home Farm Way (the Jacob Davis Farmstead) to the agenda. B. McCullough made a motion to accept the amended agenda. J. Lapachinski seconded. The agenda was approved 3-0.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Gilbertson advised that he had lunch with Leslie Welts and Kirby Keaton from the Planning Commission the week before to discuss the draft Design Review Regulations. Both members indicated they were grateful for him providing a preview, and Ms. Welts suggested that the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Design Review Committee have a joint meeting to discuss the draft rules. Key questions from Ms. Welts: (1) Why using the Secretary of Interior Standards as a base?; (2) What are the advantages to the owner of a property in the Design Review Overlay District? HPC Staff will coordinate with staff for the PC (Mr. Miller) to coordinate meetings.

Review and Approve Minutes from 3/12/2019

Tabled to next meeting, as no quorum.

AGENDA ITEMS (Actual Order of Discussion Reflected Below)

- 1. Presentation by Mike Miller, Planning Director: HPC Montpelier Master Plan & 8-10 Year Goals** (see attached materials)

- A. The Planning Commission is asking HPC to develop the City's chapter on Historic Resource Goals. Mr. Miller outlined the suggested process of developing HPC aspirations, goals, and strategies for attaining those goals, with the aim of developing a 1,500 – 2,000 word plan for the City's historic preservation goals for the next 8 to 10 years. Mr. Miller's presentation included a hypothetical set of aspirations, goals, and strategies, as well as a preliminary draft for HPC to use as a first-stage model.
- B. Commission members agreed to review the materials provided by Mr. Miller, and then discuss during the next meeting.

2. Alvarez Block (110-112 Main St.) National Register Listing Change

- A. Mr. Ancel summarized the history of the Alvarez Block – which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a “contributing” historic structure since 1978, as well as the recent renovation process by Shippee Eye Care (investment of more than \$150,000 to save the building). However, when the current owners' application for Federal Historic Tax Credits was reviewed at the National Park Service level in Washington, D.C., it was denied. The Commission agreed with Mr. Ancel that the denial wasn't in keeping with the history of the building or the purposes of the Register, and effectively delisted the property without following the appropriate procedures. There was discussion regarding the merits of appealing the determination. The Commission members present unanimously agreed to submit a letter in support of obtaining the tax credits.
- B. Members reviewed a draft letter proposed by Mr. Gilbertson, and provided suggested edits. Mr. Gilbertson will revise and coordinate with Staff to submit the letter.

3. 5 Home Farm Way (Jacob Davis Farmstead)

- A. Chair Gilbertson and Vice Chair Duggan provided an overview on the history of the building, including its prior ownership by Food Works, the history of grants and loans involved in the previous attempts at renovating the building, and the proposal on the City Council's April 24th agenda to declare the building a public nuisance. Both Messrs. Gilbertson and Duggan plan to attend the meeting. Chair Gilbertson emphasized his desire to ensure that the Council understands the historic nature of the building.

4. Proposed Changes to Federal National Register of Historic Places Regulations

- A. Chair Gilbertson briefly summarized the proposed regulatory changes for the Commission:
 - i. Changing the owner objection process from: (a) one vote per one owner of involved land; to (b) votes based on the amount of land owned – i.e., allow veto by the private owners of “a majority of the land area” within a proposed historic district.
 - ii. Providing for a “pocket veto” of a nomination of Federal property by allowing a Federal Agency to refuse to pass a nomination request on.
- B. The Commission reviewed draft comments proposed by Chair Gilbertson, suggesting edits to examples used in the comments, as well as adding arguments from other preservation organizations.
- C. Chair Gilbertson will circulate and updated draft for comment. The Commission members present agreed (unanimously) to allow the Chair to submit the comments by April 30th, after a final version is circulated for review.

Other Business

Chair Gilbertson confirmed that the next meeting will focus on long-range planning, including detailed

discussion of the Master Plan materials provided by Mr. Miller.

Next Regular Meeting Date – 5/14/2019.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.