

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 08, 2019

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COLLEEN A. PETRONE

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Meeting of the LHDSC -Local Historic District Study Committee was called to order at 6:02 PM. Chairman Harry Berkowitz, Ken Warchol, Robert Laflamme, Randi Zanca, & Dan O'Neil were in attendance; R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner was also present. Tim Reiter was absent. One (1) vacancy remains.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

August 14, 2018 & November 13, 2018

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Committee that meeting minutes for August 14, 2018 have not been filed with the Town Clerk; Randi Zanca recalled this meeting may have been canceled due to lack of quorum.

Upon motion duly made (R. Zanca) and seconded (R. Laflamme) the Committee voted (5-0) to accept the meeting minutes for November 13, 2018.

III. WHITINSVILLE -LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY AREA

Vote to Established Boundary/Properties (Revised/Reconsideration)

Based upon the recommendation of the Committee's preservation Consultant (C. Noonan) the Committee reconsidered the properties (boundaries) initially selected for inclusion of the Whitinsville Local Historic District. Understanding that it may be difficult to justify why certain properties were selected over others the Committee agreed to eliminate the housing examples from the proposed district and other properties.

The Consultant noted he was concerned with the boundary not being one cohesive district, questioning why the properties along Hill Street to the Whitin Lasell Manor were not included. Mr. Warchol explained that the houses on Hill Street, between the Gustavus Taft Superintendent House and the Lasell Manor were not built by the Whitins and therefore was not included, as they do not contribute to telling the story of the Industrial Revolution. The Consultant had suggested rather than having gaps in the district the Committee should focus on a core area, if it tells the complete story. Reminding Committee members that a district can be one (1) property or multiple properties but should be a consistent boundary if possible.

The Committee agreed to eliminate the Whitin Machine Works as they had originally only wanted to include the main administration building and not the expansions added later in the years. The consultant noted it would be difficult to justify only selecting a portion of a building (of the mill complex) in the study report and if the Committee feels the story can be told without its inclusion then the shop property, which is important to the overall history but not necessarily the beginnings and could be excluded from the local historic district. Committee members felt the story of the Industrial Revolution and how Whitinsville

became to be could be told by focusing on the main crossroads of Main Street, Douglas Road, Hill Street, Linwood Avenue, and Church Street.

The district boundary (proposed) will now encompass twelve (12) properties down from nineteen (19) identified previously. The housing examples on Fletcher Street (18-20 Fletcher Street), on Linwood Avenue (24-26 & 30-32 Linwood Avenue); Gustavus Taft House (46 Hill Street); J.C. Whitin Estate; Lasell Manor (120 Hill Street); and the Whitin Machine Works (1 Main Street) are no longer included.

Upon motion duly made (R. Zanca) and seconded (D. O'Neil) the Committee voted (5-0) to establish the boundaries/properties for inclusion in the (proposed) Whitinsville Historic District (Downtown Cross-Roads Village).

The twelve (12) properties selected include the following: (1) Fletcher House (circa 1770); (2) Paul Whitin Mill (circa 1826); (3) Whitin House/Congregational Church Parsonage (circa 1835); (4) Granite Cotton Mill (circa 1845); (5) Northbridge Memorial Town Hall (circa 1876); (6) Aldrich School (circa 1890); (7) Village Congregational Church (circa 1898); (8) Whitinsville Savings Bank (circa 1905); (9) Town Common/Civil War Memorial (circa 1905); (10) Trinity Episcopal Church (circa 1911/1929); (11) Whitinsville Social Library (circa 1913); & (12) Whitin Community Center (circa 1922).

The Town Planner had prepared a map identifying the boundaries and properties, which will be updated showing the twelve (12) selected.

IV. WHITINSVILLE -LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY AREA

Justification/Narrative of Boundary/Properties (Revised)

Ken Warchol reviewed with the Committee a draft re-write of the justification narrative prepared for the revised boundary/properties. Committee members thanked Mr. Warchol, agreeing with his description and in support of the downtown cross-road village district theme.

(draft) The Local Historic District Study Committee accepts the Whitinsville Local Historic District boundary referred to as downtown cross roads village, consisting of twelve (12) properties centered at the heart of the village of Whitinsville, where six main roads intersect at the Northbridge Memorial Town Hall and the Mumford River. The twelve properties are also part of the 326 properties of the Whitinsville National Register. The LHD is at the center of the Whitinsville National Register District and is centered around Memorial Square where 6 major streets converge at the Mumford River and where the Town Hall stands. The LHD of Whitinsville reflects the growth of a paternalistic mill village from the beginnings of the industrial Revolution. The mill village was planned and developed by the Whitin Family. They built and operated the mills that were the principal source of labor in the mill village. The Whitin family also provided housing for their workers and provided a variety of services and institutions that they built. Whitinsville contains well preserved examples of economic and social institutions of mill village life.

The proposed LHD and the 12 inclusive properties tell this story of how the Industrial Revolution transformed Whitinsville into one of New England's leading mill villages between the late 1700's to the mid 1900's. The 19 selected properties reflect industrial, governmental, civic, educational, recreational and housing institutions that display a wide range of architectural styles over the 150 years of development. The LHD boundary and its buildings were chosen by the committee because they display a wide range of the institutions in the categories above. The buildings chosen can all be viewed from a public way and lend themselves to public viewing by touring groups. The committee decided to go with a smaller LHD within the boundaries of the Whitinsville National Register District after talking to and surveying owners of property in the National Register District and then to owners within the proposed LHD. The LHD chosen has all the best examples within the National Register District but on a smaller scale. The growth of a mill village under the Whitin Family is very ell told using the proposed Whitinsville Local Historic District.

Upon motion duly made (R. Zanca) and seconded (R. Laflamme) the Committee voted (5-0) to accept the narrative justification (revised). Committee noted the wording maybe reworked as may be included in the study report to be prepared by the Consultant.

V. WHITINSVILLE -LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY AREA

Review of Local Historic District Street Index Sheet

Randi Zanca reviewed with Committee members street index sheet prepared listing the proposed properties, noting the current street address of each property, Assessor Map/Parcel information. Ms. Zanca will review property addresses with addresses noted and included with the Building Forms (Form H) filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Committee members thanked Ms. Zanca for preparing the street index.

VI. WHITINSVILLE -LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY AREA

Review of MHC Form B (Building Forms) & Form H (Parks/Landscapes)

Ken Warchol reviewed with Committee members existing MHC Form B's for the twelve (12) properties selected. Mr. Warchol noted that all of the properties with the exception of the Whitin Community Center has an existing Form H filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Mr. Warchol explained that he prepared a narrative for the Community Center and has asked the Consultant to assist on the architecture.

Mr. Bechtholdt explained that he had contacted MHC in the past and they indicated new/updated Form B's may not be necessary for this initiative, however noted he understands why the Consultant may want updated and more detailed information for inclusion in the study report.

Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Committee that the Planning Board may be able to utilize funds from a monetary donation received (Aris Group, LLC) as part of the Pine Knoll modification, where proceeds may be used to offset the cost to increase the scope of work for the Consultant. This will include attending additional meetings and updated the Form B's.

VII. WHITINSVILLE -LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY AREA
Property Owners' Survey (Updated Questions & Exemptions)

Committee members reviewed (draft) Property Owners' Opinion Survey to be provided to each of the twelve (12) properties selected. Mr. Bechtholdt explained the purpose of the survey is to gauge the property owners on their understanding of what a local historic district is, whether the feel a local district is appropriate for Whitinsville and what exemptions, if any they would like to see, before the Committee prepares (draft) bylaw provisions.

Mr. Warchol noted that a number of the properties currently have existing preservation restrictions either with the state or the town. Committee approved the (draft) Property Owners' Opinion Survey and directed the Town Planner to send out mailings to the various property owners.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Committee members acknowledged receipt of various email communications from the Consultant.

IX. NEXT STEPS

Committee members reviewed timelines, flowchart prepared for establishing a local historic district and determined the study would not be ready in time for consideration at the 2019 Spring Annual Town Meeting (May 2019) and decided to pursue local adoption for the 2019 Fall Annual Town Meeting in October. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the Committee, once received compile survey responses and look to host a public workshop in March 2019.

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Committee that he would prepare a public forum notice and distribute to property owners and publish same on the town's webpage. Mr. Berkowitz, Mr. Warchol and Mr. Bechtholdt will also attend Board of Selectmen meeting in February to provide a general overview and update.

X. ADJOURN MEETING

Having no additional business, the Committee adjourned its meeting of January 08, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Northbridge Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk