

Town of Franklin, Massachusetts

Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2018

Commissioners Present: Mary Olsson, Phyllis Malcolm, Colette Ferguson, Bob Percy, Richard Remillard, Jeremy Ball

Associate Members Present: Kai Olsson, Paul Pisani

Absent: Connie Lawson

Visiting: Brad Chaffee, Debbie Pellegrini (FFHM)

A. CALL TO ORDER/OPENING REMARKS

- a. Mary called the meeting to order at 6:30
- b. Mary noted that there had been no March meeting, due to inclement weather

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes from the February 10th meeting were accepted as submitted with no corrections.

C. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS – None

D. APPOINTMENTS – None

E. PRESENTATIONS – None

F. DEMOLITION REQUESTS –

- a. 116 Alpine Place, c. 1920
 - i. Original structure has been overbuilt with expansions, modern renovations have removed architectural character inside and out, and a deed history search revealed nothing of note.
 - ii. Jeremy moved that the structure currently has no historical or architectural significance to the Town; motion approved 6-0
 - iii. Jeremy will provide notification to the Building Commissioner
- b. 300 West Central Street, c. 1880
 - i. Modern renovations have removed architectural character inside and out, and a deed history search revealed nothing of note
 - ii. Jeremy moved that the structure currently has no historical or architectural significance to the Town; motion approved 6-0
 - iii. Jeremy will provide notification to the Building Commissioner
- c. 70 East Central Street, c. 1907
 - i. Brad Chaffee provided photographs of interior and exterior, showing current condition of the structure, which is very bad in terms of damage and clutter. Modern renovations and subdivision have largely removed architectural character on the interior, although some original millwork was present around first floor foyer doorways.
 - ii. Modern renovations have partially altered architectural character on the exterior, as well, recent rental tenants have allowed significant structural and cosmetic damage to happen inside and out, and a deed history search revealed nothing of note.
 - iii. Mr. Chaffee offered a walkthrough for anyone who wanted to have a quick look, but advised us again that the condition is very bad.
 - iv. Mr. Chaffee also provided renderings of the proposed two buildings, which will be mixed-use residential (12 units) and retail, with 16 street level parking spots and tenant parking below. The Commission noted that the proposed buildings are substantially different from the original structure in terms of massing and appearance and will continue to change the character of the downtown south of Clark Square.

- v. Jeremy moved that the structure currently has no historical or architectural significance to the Town; motion approved 5-1, with Bob objecting on grounds that the house could be restored to its original state and would then continue to contribute a historical perspective to the architectural character of Franklin's downtown.
- vi. Jeremy will provide notification to the Building Commissioner

G. FRIENDS OF THE FRANKLIN HISTORICAL MUSEUM (FFHM)

- a. Fund balance is currently approximately \$8,000
- b. Debbie reported that from the appeal letters that had been sent to most businesses and prior donors, \$460 had been received
- c. Letters have been sent out as a reminder for the next Appraisal Day (April 22nd)
- d. A question was raised about the proceeds received from the gift shop, and Debbie indicated that this balance would appear on the end of year summary
- e. We will have 48 ornaments that we are getting for \$300 and plan to sell at \$15-17 per (usual retail price is \$20) - these were in inventory from Sally's Alley, who gave us a very good price for the lot, and are not available to re order for future.
 - i. A recommendation was raised that any future ornaments could have a date added, possibly inspiring collectors to make a yearly purchase.

H. DISCUSSION /VOTE – None

I. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Treasurer's Report (Phyllis Malcolm) –
 - i. We have spent about \$2000 of our \$6000 budget.
 - ii. Mary will place an order to Staples and Gaylord for conservation supplies
 - iii. Any outstanding receipts need to be reconciled by the end of June
- b. List of active subcommittees
 - i. Mary will get a list of the active subcommittees compiled in advance of the May meeting, and we will get commitments from individuals to provide help on a monthly basis
 - ii. Volunteers may need training on researching, archiving, using Past Perfect, etc.

J. EVENTS –

- a. The Second Sunday Speaker Series continued in March with Alan Earls' presentation on the Blizzard of '78 and in April with Joe Landry's history of the Franklin schools and Horace Mann.
- b. The next events on the schedule are:
 - i. 4/21 – special reception for the players from the original 1953 Little League team at 9:30 am
 - 1. Little League exhibit is going up this week
 - 2. Invitations to the reception have been sent out
 - 3. It was recommended that this event be recorded, possibly with assistance from Franklin TV
 - ii. 4/22 – Appraisal day
 - iii. 4/27 – “Taste of Art Week”, which is a preview of the upcoming Art Week
 - iv. 4/28 – Art Week – art performance in the FHM, with Dennis Ferguson performing on the Trowbridge piano
 - 1. Tuning and some minor repairs are needed on the piano, with the repairs already scheduled for April 16th. It was moved and carried that an approval for up to \$300 is granted in advance for tuning and minor repairs.
 - 2. The wish list allowed for \$150 for the Trowbridge to be tuned prior to Artsweek

- v. 4/29 – Art Week – Prolatio Singers
- vi. 5/3 – Art Week – Jon Ceander Mitchell, retired UMass Boston Chamber Orchestra conductor, will tell us “Now you can take off your clothes!”
- vii. 5/5 – Art Week – Notable Blend
- viii. 5/6 – Art Week – Kai Olsson Art & Music
- ix. 5/13 – Second Sunday Speaker Series #4 with Jim Johnston; Bob will confirm the date with Mr. Johnston

K. OLD BUSINESS

- a. New Logo for Museum – Kai to reach out to Stacey David, as the Franklin Cultural Council ran a successful logo change contest; possibly schedule this for the Fall?
- b. Second Sunday Speaker Series – Mary still working on booking speakers for June, July, August, and December. She has reached out to Tri-County for a speaker on Wedding Cakes during the Bridal Gown exhibit. Also looking for a speaker on wedding traditions and wedding fashions.
- c. Sign for the former Horace Mann School location – Jeremy to work on content and coordinate with Gus, using the information at the current Franklin High School; should include photograph, small history, etc.
- d. Record of Street Names and how they were named – it was discussed that the scope and reach of this project is probably impossible, given the lack of records around the specific reasons for naming of original streets, but it might be easier to reveal ties to Franklin families (Nason, McCarthy, Ruggles, and others immediately come to mind), where associations with original land holdings came to bear the names of the families.
 - i. A sidebar conversation was had on “Circa” signs and “George Washington slept here” type signs, as Bob had been asked a general question about these by a Franklin resident. Research into a particular structure’s history can be done, but we do not have a proactive program (currently) that assembles these histories in advance.
- e. Donation of Trowbridge Piano – Jim Ialeggio of Grand Piano Solutions assessed the piano, and says it is wrecked.
 - i. Mr. Ialeggio provided a proposal to restore it, with a price tag of \$13,000; it was agreed that this was not a worthwhile investment of resources.
 - ii. It was moved and carried (6-0) that Remy should save and restore the sound plate (the metal ‘harp’ component), the decorated upper panel and music rack, and the legs in order to display these.
- f. Application for Collections Assessment Program (CAP) was denied, citing a need for a full time person or equivalent. It was recommended that we could reapply again for next year, and that we should do so early in the process. Mary has requested that Commission members and volunteers document every hour of volunteer work (on site or off site) that is done for the FHM, including research for exhibits, conservation of artifacts, setup or takedown for exhibits, etc. in order to demonstrate a “full time equivalent”
- g. Museum website – still a work in progress. Pointers to old website content need to be broken and reestablished to the new website content. Brian Lyra has provided a link to the 360 virtual tour that he created. Links have been provided to documents scanned by Digital Commonwealth, as well. Bob and Mary will meet to discuss next steps.
- h. Digital Commonwealth scanning – Jake has emailed to indicate that they have finished the most recent set of documents and are now working on the metadata necessary to allow searching within the documents. Bob will coordinate a new package of documents to be scanned.
- i. Proposed change to demo delay bylaw – Jeremy will schedule a meeting with Gus and Bryan Taberner to discuss, ideally in August to include Mary, early or late in the day.

- j. Little League Baseball display – Colette to meet with Mary to finalize content and get exhibit installed

L. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Digital Commonwealth membership is up for renewal – It was moved and carried that an approval for up to \$60 is granted for renewing FHC’s membership in the Digital Commonwealth.
- b. Phyllis asked about the bridal gown display timing –
- c. Paul scanned pictures from the Donald Lloy album and has sent those images to a web developer who will look into creating a web page – Mr. Lloy was a WWII fighter pilot from Franklin, and his family has generously donated his photo album to the FHM. This webpage should be linked to from the new FHM webpage, and Paul is still doing work to determine the last names of many of the people pictured in the photos.
- d. The Thompson Press building will be coming down soon (May?) – we will be given an opportunity to walk through before the building comes down. Phyllis will talk to Lisa (and maybe Joe Halligan?) to coordinate this.
- e. We were contacted by Faith Flaherty (from St. Mary’s parish), who is “wondering what to do with” the Hayward Mansion Carriage House at the intersection of Queen and Pleasant streets – They were told, years back, that they couldn’t do anything because it’s a historical landmark. Originally, this building had a turntable for rotating the carriages and had been used until recently as a storage barn for St. Rocco’s festival decoration. Jeremy confirmed that it’s FRN.234 on the MACRIS inventory, but since we don’t have a Local Historic District with appearance bylaws, we have no real recourse in terms of renovation. Jeremy to find out more about their plans in terms of renovation.

M. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

- a. None

N. ADJOURN – There being no further business, there was a 6-0 vote to adjourn at 8:30PM