

Town of Franklin Massachusetts

Historical Commission

**Meeting Minutes January 12, 2022 Held via Zoom**

Commission Members Present: Phyllis Malcolm, Randy LaRosa, Colette Ferguson, Paul Pisani, Mary Olsson. Associate Members: Alan Earls, Jan Prentice.

FFHM Rep: Debbie Pellegri

Public: Joe Halligan, Miraj Ahmed, Mohiuddin Ahmed

Chairperson Mary Olsson moved to hear the demolition request by moving it to first on the agenda. All approved.

Mohiuddin (Mo)Ahmed, representing Taj Estates of Franklin discussed the property at 230 East Central Street, and their request to tear down the present building and replace it with apartment buildings. The home was built in 1895 originally owned by Alberton Metcalf Hill.

The commission determined that the building was not historically significant to the town. A few questions were asked by the commission before a vote was taken on the request.

The demolition request was approved 4-1.

Alan Earls asked if commission members might be allowed to walk the site before demolition. The request was agreed to, Joe Halligan will facilitate the timing.

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The Commission meeting was called to order at 6:47PM

Meeting minutes of the of the December 8, 2021 meeting were accepted as written.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

DEMOLITION REQUESTS: 230 East Central Street, see above.

FFHM Report: Debbie reported that at the Friends annual meeting, held Sunday 1/9/22, they approved $3,000 for Commission use in 2022 including Second Sunday Speaker Series, refreshments for events, flowers, etc. The Friends have a balance of $13,000. They will be sending out a donation letter again this year. Mary thanked the Friends for their support on behalf of the Commission.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

* TREASURER: Balance not available. We recently paid the Digital Commonwealth dues.
* ARCHIVIST update: no update
* SECOND SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES. Dennis Sardella’s presentation on Byzantine and Russian Icon was well received. There was a small crowd due in part to the weather and the concern over Covid. Mary will offer another date, later in the year if Dennis would like to do his presentation again. Mary is working on speakers for the rest of the year.
* EXHIBIT COMMITTEE: Our one big exhibit planned for this year is the Bridal Gown Exhibit.

OLD BUSINESS:

* Mass Memories – the organization appears to have postponed many of their events, due to covid. Paul said the event would require 15-20 volunteers, and would hope to get 150-200 contributors. Paul will provide a link for the project handbook. We will continue to consider this for a potential future date.
* Updating front entrance – we need to organize the project and move forward with the plan to paint and freshen up the front entrance. Permission has been given for us to do the work ourselves.
* The ‘Wish List’ had been presented to the FFHM and the majority of the items had been approved, as stated previously.
* BPL Scanning – Alan is working with BPL, Digital Commonwealth and NEDOC on the scanning of the Sentinels. A digital microfilm will be produced first, then that will be scanned. The appears to be some gaps of the bound volumes.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Phyllis said copies of sketches of the Mann Homestead were found at the Senior Center and they will be donating them to the museum. Mary suggested they might be the pencil sketch done by Horace Mann’s sister-in-law, artist Sophia Hawthorne.

Phyllis asked that we consider having her brother-in-law Richard Krementz do a presentation on his 5-month tour of the Underground Railroad network. He will be back sometime in April.

Colette asked if the Commission was committed to accepting a second room of furniture from Jim Johnston. Debbie stated the Town Council accepted the donations for the first room, but not a second room. Mary will check with Jamie on exactly what was accepted by the TC. There was much discussion on giving up more exhibit space. The room proposed for the 2nd Johnston room is used for exhibits, and the Commission feels the museum is too small to dedicate two full rooms to period furniture. The majority feel we have honored the request with the first room. At the request of the Commission, Mary will relay the decision to Jamie and Jim.

There were further questions about what Jim might do with his house. It was suggested that CPA money might be used to assist in moving the house when the time comes. The first CPA requests are to be submitted by January 18th.

Randy asked about getting the Trowbridge Piano tuned and said he had a friend who would be willing to pay for it. Colette said it could be tuned, but that it would never be up to concert pitch. If we were to keep it tuned, it would ideally need to be tuned twice a year. Mary asked why we would pay to have it tuned regularly since it is more of an exhibit piece rather than a functional piece that is played. Randy to follow up with Percell Piano Service of Medway.

Alan said the Ben Franklin readathon was scheduled for later in the month and asked if anyone would be interested in participating. It will be taking place at Franklin TV Studios.

Alan also brought up the recent passing of former TC member Andy Bissanti. Alan said it was always Andy’s wish to record the history of Italian families in Franklin and all the great stories. It was decided it would be a nice tribute to Andy’s memory to do that in his name.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:55