

Chaplin Historic District Commission

Minutes

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

These unapproved Historic District Commission meeting minutes are forwarded to the Chaplin Town Clerk in a draft format. These minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Commission. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting, voted upon and noted in the meeting minutes.

A. Regular Business Meeting.

1. Call to order, roll call and seating of alternates. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Chairman W. Church. Present were regular members D. Cox, C. Smith and P. Peifer and alternate members L. Ricklin, C. Lindquist and W. Rose. Dr. Lindquist was seated for J. Givens. Also present: First Selectman Juan Roman and eight members of the public.

2. Approval of February 7, 2023 minutes. P. Peifer moved and D. Cox seconded to approve the minutes. Peifer, Church, Smith, and Cox voted to approve, Lindquist abstained, motion approved.

3. Audience for citizens: Johanne Philbrick spoke regarding the question of whether to move the Chaplin Museum building or keep it in situ. She said the real question to ask is how important is it to residents to preserve the history and uniqueness of the town and to preserve a building to its former prominence. Bob Dubos said the question of moving the building was discussed when he was First Selectman 2007-2009 and it should be moved due to lack of parking. Peggy Church said she is unsure about moving it, but unless the public has access it will not be used. Parking may be addressed. She also said ADA has four exceptions for Historic District structures and she would like several events hosted at the museum so the public could see the present condition of it. Mrs. Philbrick concurred. First Selectman Juan Roman said the building has a lot of stories and he wants them preserved but it is not in the right place. He wants people from Chaplin as well as other places to see our history. Sally Zimmerman who owns the former store in the District talked about the different uses the museum building has had from dry goods store to Town Hall and then museum. She and Allen Olsen pointed out that if the original residents hadn't valued the buildings and repurposed them and even moved them to reuse, there would not be the Historic District we see. Mr. Olsen noted that when they bought the old store, it had been vacant for fifty years, but it still existed because of the work of former owners and the establishment of the Historic District. Now it is preserved. Chaplin has a rare history that should be preserved and the museum should have a viable use.

4. New Business Mr. Church changed item c: **Museum Move** to item a.

a. Museum Move First Selectman Roman informed the Commission that he will bring the issue of moving the museum to the Library site to Town Meeting. Mrs. Cox asked how the question would be framed and pointed out the topic was already discussed before the town. Mr. Roman said he wants to know if the residents want to preserve artifacts in an accessible structure and he is willing to listen to all opinions. There was discussion about whether a Town Meeting should happen before an application was submitted to the HDC. Mr. Roman said he just wanted to give the HDC a heads up on what is planned and that a specific plan will be presented to the HDC. Mr. Peifer wanted to know if moving the building which would impact the gateway to the District would affect their Certified Local Government status. Ms. Zimmerman advised that using local funds was acceptable but federal funds might affect the CLG. Dr. Lindquist asked if the Town

Meeting discussion indicated a vote would be taken. Mr. Roman said the Meeting was to get a consensus to move forward. Mrs. Ricklin said the move would change the character of the district but buildings are meant to be used and they are moved to reuse; we must think of preservation for future generations.

b. Proposed revision of Library/Senior Center parking area and sidewalk to Town Hall.

First Selectman Roman presented preliminary plans to expand the parking lot at the Library/Senior Center and add a sidewalk to connect with the Town Hall property. The plans include removing some landscaping, installing lighting, benches and a crosswalk on Chaplin St. to the north side where the sidewalk would run along Rte. 198 to Town Hall. He said the plan of conservation had a plan to connect Town Hall and the Library. The sidewalk would be ADA compliant along with a new accessible sidewalk at Garrison Field. The plan will be brought before Town Meeting. Members said it should come before the HDC for approval as there are hardscape changes and lighting installations. Dr. Lindquist questioned how many people would actually use the sidewalk. Mrs. Ricklin said a walkability study was done to look at the traffic, the 198 intersection and how it could be made safer. Mrs. Smith asked if the sidewalk would have a guardrail, Mr. Roman said it would be raised above street level for safety. Mr. Rose said people pick up lunch at the Senior Center and walk to Town Hall. Ms. Olsen said the town has a 20 foot sidewalk easement on the north side of Chaplin St. Mr. Peifer asked why not expand the Town Hall parking instead, Mr. Roman said this parking lot needs expansion for events at the Senior Center and Library. He has used NECOG for the plans and that counts toward the town's contribution to grants.

c. HDC Membership Mr. Church received a note from regular member Jean Givens saying since she was going to be out of the country for a while, she would like to be changed to an alternate member. Mr. Church was open to suggestions for new members. The Board of Selectmen have to approve members. Mr. Peifer's term is up this year and he indicated he would be willing to continue as a regular member.

5. Correspondence Mr. Church received a note from the Recreation Commission about holding a Chaplin Day at Garrison Field on September 9th. They would like all boards and commission to participate to connect with the whole community.

6. Old Business Mr. Peifer and Ms. Givens created a Solar Panel Guideline for the Historic District to advise residents on what information is needed for the HDC to review their application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Church said the guideline is consistent with past practice but spells out specific information the HDC needs to render a decision on solar panels. On a question of whether photo examples should be included, Mrs. Smith said because of the unique characteristics of the Historic District properties, photos might be misleading. The members were in agreement that the document gave the applicant the specifics of what information should be supplied to the Commission.

7. Adjournment. Mr. Church adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Peifer- Recording Clerk- HDC