

CONCORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Public Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
Town House Public Hearing Room, 22 Monument Square

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's Office, Concord's Historical Commission held a public meeting in the Town House Public Hearing Room at 22 Monument Square, Concord starting at 7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Nancy Nelson, Andrew Koh, Claire Gauthier, Melissa Saalfield, and Robert Gross

Staff: Heather Gill, Senior Planner

Ms. Gauthier called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Discussion: Public Shade Tree Planting Project

Annette Bagley and Gwen Acton of Elm Street, presented Concord's public shade tree policy to the Commission. They explained that the town's policy is not to plant trees next to the road, but to plant them 12-20 feet from the roadway. She stated that Concord does not have a tree committee, and that the Town does not have a large enough budget to plant the recommended 250 trees per year. Ms. Acton reviewed the various benefits of shade trees. Mr. Gross asked why the town's policy was written this way. Ms. Acton stated that the policy was written and adopted by the DPW without input by various other committees in town. Mr. Gross questioned whether the DPW Director should be the Town's tree warden, due to his time intensive position as director of the public works department. Ms. Bagley presented the history of the Concord Ornamental Tree Society. She explained that the 48 member committee planted 116 trees over a three year period. Ms. Bagley stated that the current policy is very stringent, and they hope to eventually restore the tree lined rural roads of Concord. Ms. Nelson stated that the safety and maintenance issues with shade trees should be considered. Ms. Gauthier stated that the sidewalks downtown are already quite narrow, and planting trees may create more accessibility issues. Mr. Koh stated that there is a GIS layer that shows all of the trees in town, which they could use to quantify their data. Ms. Bagley stated that this is an informative meeting, and they are hoping to gain the Historical Commission's support should they move forward with a proposed amendment to the tree planting policy. Alice Kaufman stated that Rich Reine, the Director of the DPW, is a certified arborist, and holds a degree in forestry. Ms. Kaufman stated that the state law doesn't say that the tree warden for the town has to be a singular position, so they town is utilizing its current assets. Brian Rosborough, of 56 Elm Street stated that he supports the petitioners, listed more benefits of public shade trees and suggested asking residents to donate trees and the time to maintain them.

Ms. Gauthier motioned to support further research into the Town's Public Shade Tree Policy, the role of the Town's Tree Warden, and the establishment of a Tree Committee. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion and all other voted in favor.

Discussion: Wireless Communication Facility and Section 106

Jack McBride of 25 Stow Street and Alisha Boyajian of 33 Stow Street met with the Commission to discuss wireless communication facilities and the Section 106 review process. Mr. McBride summarized the RFP to locate antennas within the cupola at Emerson Umbrella. He stated that he and other neighbors are not comfortable with the siting, and would like to engage a community dialogue about it. Mr. McBride stated that he has been researching the Section 106 process regarding the 2006 application to locate a monopole at 141 Keyes Road. Mr. Gross asked why antennas are needed in this location. Mr. McBride stated that the demand for wireless has increased, which has caused problems with the current service. He explained that the FCC

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regulates the location of a new pole to be 1000 feet from a residence, but only 300 feet from a residence for a new antenna. Ms. Boyajian stated that she is a mom with a background in child development. Ms. Boyajian presented past research that has been conducted on the potential for carcinogenic effects and other medical issues, due to prolonged exposure and close proximity to radio frequencies. Ms. Boyajian stated that setbacks are important to protecting children. She stated that she knows that there are no definitive answers as to what is safe and what is not safe, but that there is a lot of research telling us to be cautious. Mr. Gross asked if the effects of radio frequencies are from the antennas or from the routers and phones located within houses. Mr. Gross stated that millions of Americans already live within close proximity to antennas, and asked if there is any research showing negative effects. Ms. Boyajian stated that it is hard to study something currently happening; and compared it to studying a bus you are currently riding on. Ms. Nelson stated that the Historical Commission does not have the authority to approve or disapprove a wireless application; stating that their role is to review the visual effects on historic resources. Ms. Nelson clarified that the Historical Commission cannot consider health effects in their review under Section 106. Ms. Kaufman stated that the lack of service downtown has caused some issues with emergency communications. Ms. Kaufman explained that FCC regulations state that decisions for wireless communication facilities cannot be based on public health. Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Use Management, stated that the Historic Districts Commission denied an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in 2006 for a monopole at 141 Keyes Road. She stated that there were visual impacts to the National Park, the wild and scenic rivers, National Register historic properties, and three local historic districts. Mr. Koh wondered if the future of voice over internet will change the need for more cell towers.

Discussion: Demolition Review Bylaw Amendments

Ms. Gill stated that Ms. Strausberg and she have been working on developing a best practices guide for administering the demolition review bylaw. Ms. Gill explained that she would like to develop a list of findings that can be used to support the Commission's decision of preferably preserved. Ms. Gill stated that she will keep the Commission updated on this.

2019 Meeting Schedule

The Commission reviewed the draft 2019 meeting schedule. The Commission asked that the February 14th meeting be moved to another date, possibly moving the January meeting later in the month and cancelling the February meeting. Ms. Gill stated that she will look at her other meeting scheduled and try to make some changes.

Updates

Mr. Gross stated that he has been working on drafting a comment letter regarding the 430 Old Bedford Road development. He explained that there is tension between historic preservation and agricultural land preservation, and that there are no state laws that regulate the preservation of historic landscapes. Ms. Rasmussen stated that this is something that the National Parks and Scenic Byways have struggled with for a long time. Ms. Kaufman stated that the Historic Districts Commission has had discussions in the past on how they can preserve historic landscapes; and referenced a development proposal on Lowell Road. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the issue begins with subdivision control law, because if there is frontage, the owner has the right to subdivide the land. The Commission discussed the 430 Old Bedford Road comment letter further, and asked Ms. Gill to find out when the letter must be submitted by.

Minutes

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The Commission asked that the minutes are placed on the next meeting agenda.

Other Business

Ms. Gill reminded the Commission that there is a Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee public meeting on Monday, October 15, 2018 at 6:00pm at the Minute Man National Park Visitor's Center.

Mr. Koh moved to adjourn. Ms. Gauthier seconded the motion and all others voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 P.M.

Minutes Approved: 12/13/2018

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Gill
Senior Planner