

ROXBURY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes - January 20, 2023

- A meeting of the Roxbury Historic Preservation Commission was held at 10:00am on Friday, January 20, 2023, at the Roxbury Town Hall.

Present: Michael Mathis – Chairman
Christine O’Shaughnessy
Lewis Wendell
Doug McLaurine – arrived at 10:07am
Denise Johnston – Clerk

Absent: Peg Ellsworth

- The meeting was called to order by Michael Mathis at 10:02am
- On motion of Michael Mathis, second by Lewis Wendell, the minutes from the meeting on October 21, 2022, were approved.
Ayes: 3 (Mathis, Wendell, O’Shaughnessy)
Nays: 0
- Members completed a review of the RHPC laws and guidelines. Key points and takeaways are below.
 - It was noted that there were some key differences in the law from 2009 vs that of 2011. One such difference is that the 2009 law did not allow chain link fences. The 2011 version of the law does not have specific reference to fences (except to disallow new fencing in the front yard), but does indicate that the committee should consider the texture and materials when it comes to issuing a certificate of compatibility. This broader reference would still allow members to address chain link fences.
 - The 2011 law specifically states that signage can not be installed within the district prior to getting a certificate of compatibility. Members discussed that signage has been installed without approval and recognize that this might be because residents do not understand that approval is needed. Many signage requests have come before the committee on a voluntary basis. Members of the RHPC agree that there is a gap in the law and changes to the law and building permit process may need to be made.
 - The local law states that we need 5 committee members, and the law of 2011 does encourage residency but does not require it.
 - It was noted that demolition is only accepted as a last resort.
 - Within the law, reference to a vice chairman of the committee prompted the committee to elect a vice chairman.
 - Section 2 – Subsection D, points out the responsibilities of The Commission. Members agree that more of an effort needs to be made to increase public awareness of the local law and the application process. Lewis mentioned that we should distribute brochures annually to all residents within the hamlet.
 - Section 2 – Subsection F, refers to The Commission meeting by conference call. The members think we should modify this to include zoom and online meeting tools. The committee will ask the town board about making this change.

- Sections 10 and 12 of the law will require more discussion. These sections address enforcement and violations of the law. More thought needs to be put into these areas. We will ask the town board if a process for enforcement of violations currently exists in other regulatory law within the town.
- Members reviewed the application procedure, and we will put an emphasis on the following points, to ensure that the law is being followed precisely.
 - A letter of completion will be sent to the applicant via email and regular mail within 10 days of receiving the application.
 - If any objections are raised about an application, a public meeting will be scheduled within 30 days of receiving the complete application. This may mean that we need to schedule an extra meeting.
 - The town clerk should receive both a hard copy and an electronic (emailed) copy of every application.
- On motion of Michael Mathis, second by Christine O'Shaughnessy, Lewis Wendell was nominated to serve as the vice chairman of the Roxbury Historic Preservation Commission.
Ayes: 4 (Mathis, McLaurine, Wendell, O'Shaughnessy)
- On motion of Michael Mathis, second by Christine O'Shaughnessy, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51am.