

Wallingford Historic Properties Commission

Combined Annual Meeting and Request for Certificate of Appropriateness meeting.

May 19, 2020

Minutes

Please note, due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held via teleconference and included a rescheduled Annual meeting which had been postponed from March due to the state limits on public gatherings.

In attendance: Kimberly Lode-Dellaselva, Chair, Tara Knapp, Clerk, (regular); Cheryl Christie Collett Vice Chair, (regular); Ray Ross (regular), Barbara Sibley (regular), Bob Prentice (alternate),

Absent: Jean Garcia (alternate), Maria Santiago (alternate).

Public: None

Guest: Richard Staub representing the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by chair Kimberly Lode-Dellaselva.
2. Roll Call: Chair Lode-Dellaselva conducted a roll call. She noted that alternate Jean Garcia had tendered her resignation verbally last year from the Commission but did not follow up with the required notification in writing to the Town Council. Alternate Maria Santiago has not been in touch, has not formally resigned, but is not reachable by phone, mail or email.
3. Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Ray Ross motioned to accept the minutes of November 21, 2019. Commissioner Barbara Sibley seconded the motion. Commissioners Knapp and Christie-Collett abstained citing that they had not been present for that meeting. The motion to accept the minutes carried unanimously by the remainder of the Commissioners.
4. Annual Meeting: The Annual meeting was called to order by Chair Lode-Dellaselva at 7:05 p.m. She stated for the record that the Annual meeting had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission's purpose is to preserve and protect the properties under its jurisdiction and its annual operating budget is \$0.
5. Overview and Status of Properties: The properties under the jurisdiction of this committee are the following: Blakeslee property, Royce House, Johnson Mansion.

Discussion began with the Blakeslee property. The owner is the Town of Wallingford. Commissioner Ross expressed some concern that heavy equipment had been seen on the property. He thought it prudent to touch base with the town of Wallingford. While no buildings exist anymore on the site, it had been preserved and considered historically relevant due to the belief that there are items buried on the property as well as original foundations from the 17th century. Commissioner Lode-Dellaselva will send a letter of inquiry to the Mayor regarding the status of the property as it is under the jurisdiction of the Historic Properties Commission. For historic

perspective, Commissioner Christie-Collett shared that the property had belonged to the State of CT originally and was transferred to the Town of Wallingford. It was then purchased by the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust who oversaw the Blakeslee house on the property. Due to age and disrepair the house came down. The land then reverted back to the Town of Wallingford.

Commissioner Ross reported on both the Royce House and Johnson Mansion which are owned by the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust of which he is a member. He reported that there is no current work on the Johnson Mansion. There is some concern about a tree in the backyard but for now it is being watched. The Royce House does not have any land or exterior work underway at this time. Due to COVID-19 the work on the Well House by an Eagle Scout has been delayed. Later in the meeting they will be seeking an extension on the original COA. He added the shed will be removed shortly. For both properties tourism has been suspended due to COVID-19.

6. Public Comment: There was no comment from the public.
7. Review and Discuss Annual Report Draft: Commissioner Lode-Dellaselva had e-mailed a draft of the 2019-2020 Wallingford Historic Properties Commission annual report to the Commission prior to the meeting. She opened the floor for questions or comments on the annual report and invited feedback and edits. Commissioner Christie-Collett raised the concern regarding the two absent Alternative Commissioners and asked when their terms ended. Chair Lode-Dellaselva reported that both terms expired in 2021 and she will ask Town Council if they want to pursue replacing these two positions now rather than waiting till 2021. There were no other questions or edits to the document from the Commissioners and a motion to accept the draft carried unanimously.
8. Expiration of Commissioner Terms: Kimberly Lode-Dellaselva and Tara Knapp both have terms that have expired with this annual meeting. They both expressed a desire to serve another five-year term. Chair Lode-Dellaselva turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Christie-Collette who formally recommended that both Lode-Dellaselva and Knapp be appointed for another five-year term. Commissioner Sibley seconded the motion. Discussion then ensued about the proper process for renewal. Commissioner Ross pointed out that new members are appointed by the Town Council. It was clarified that the Commission makes the recommendation and the Town Council then is empowered with the appointment. With that clarification, Commission Ross then made the motion that the Commission recommends that Kimberly Lode-Dellaselva and Tara Knapp be reappointed by the Town Council for an another five-year term. Commissioner Prentice seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
9. Selection of Officers: Commissioner Ross made a motion to continue the existing slate of officers pending approval of the appointments of Kimberly Lode-Dellaselva and Tara Knapp. Commissioner Prentice seconded. No objections were made. The motion carried unanimously.
10. End of Annual Meeting: Commissioner Sibley motioned to close the meeting and it was seconded by Commissioner Knapp. The motion carried and the Annual meeting closed at 7:45 p.m.
11. Statement of Application for Certificate of Appropriateness: The Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust came before the Commission to see a COA for the installation of National Register Signage at both the Royce House at 538 North Main St and the Johnson Mansion at 153 South Main St.
12. Applicant Presentation: Richard Staub representing the WHPT took the Commissioners through the process. He had provided a packet prior to the meeting which included visuals of the sign and

sample language. Mr. Staub noted that the marker is designed by the National Historic Registry and allows for two variables: the property name and the year of installation. It stands approximately 6 feet high and measures 18h x 32w. It is constructed of cast aluminum and is brown in color with white lettering. The William Pomeroy Foundation name would appear at the bottom since they provided the funding to pay for the two signs – approximately \$1200.

13. HPC Questions: Commissioner Ross asked about placement on the property. The WHPT will work with the Town Engineering dept. for placement. It must not block sight lines yet be visible to the public. Commissioner Sibley asked where the signs are manufactured. Her concern was a delay in receiving the signs because of the pandemic and the need to come in front of the Commission again for an extension. Mr. Staub reported it was from the Midwest, he believed Ohio. Commissioner Lode-Dellaselva asked about the timeframe for manufacturing and if it would take longer than 180 days. Mr. Staub did not believe so.
14. Public Question and Answer period: None
15. Possible Action on the Application: Commissioner Knapp moved to approve the application; it was seconded by Commissioner Christie-Collett. With no objections the motion carried unanimously.
16. Request to Extend Certificate of Appropriateness: The Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust requests and extension for the Eagle Scout project to construct a “Well House” as a cover to the unsightly electric box on the Royce House property at 538 North Main St. due to COVID-19. The scouts’ efforts were postponed due to the pandemic and need for social distancing.
17. HPC Questions: There were no questions from the Commission.
18. Public Question & Answer period: none
19. Possible Action on Request: Commissioner Lode-Dellaselva motioned to approve the extension. Commission Christi-Collett seconded the motion. There were no objections and the motion carried unanimously.
20. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:07p.m.

Minutes submitted by Tara Knapp, HPC clerk

