

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes – Approved

DATE: November 21, 2023

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Claire Teague Senior Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gary Leveille, James Mercer, Marilyn Bisiewicz, David Rutstein, Malcolm Fick, Abby Schroeder

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Don Howe, Paul Ivory, Patrick Hollenbeck, Ruby Chang

1. Chairman Fick called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.
2. *Mr. Mercer moved to approve the draft minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bisiewicz. All voted to approve.*
3. Old Business
 - CPA Update -- Mr. Mercer reported that all Step 1 applications were approved. Step 2 applications will be reviewed in December.
 - Updates on various projects reported on:
 - i. Trolley Shelter –
 1. Mr. Ivory reported that his work continues to weed through source materials prior to distilling them for the signage. Mr. Mercer offered vintage trolley photos that were well received. Mr. Howe suggested that the carousel-type sign on Rosseter Street might be a good model for the Trolley Shelter signage.
 2. Mr. Howe reported that the trees and lights were completed and that encroaching bushes will be relocated.
 - ii. Ramsdell Library
 1. Mr. Leveille reported that chunks of plaster had fallen from the ceiling onto the Town historical archives on the 2nd floor. He speculated that it might have been from the recent construction. He informed the library staff of the situation.
 2. Mr. Fick introduced the topic of the Library Trustees request for a letter supporting the CPA application for Ramsdell Library.
 - a. Mr. Hollenbeck explained that the requested CPA grant for \$150,000 was necessary to apply for a state library grant that would be a 60% match for up to \$5 million. He said that if the grant is awarded to the town, work would begin in 2027 and would necessitate relocating the contents of the library, including the Town artifact collection that is stored on the 2nd floor and maintained by the Historical Commission. He explained that the grant can only be used for Library purposes and,

if the grant is used to restore the 2nd floor, the Town historical archives could not be returned to the 2nd floor. He suggested instead that the Town archives could be stored in one of the mill buildings, digitized, or moved to a new building that the town could build or acquire for the purpose.

- b. A general discussion followed concerning the proposed project.
 - i. Mr. Mercer asked if the Selectboard would be endorsing the project. Mr. Hollenbeck said the project is scheduled for consideration by the Selectboard on December 4.
 - ii. Mr. Fick expressed concern that the Town, already struggling to support the library financially, would not be prepared to spend \$2 million for the project plus whatever annual expense is required to operate the new Ramsdell Library.
 - iii. Dr. Chang said that there were many issues at Ramsdell that need remediation. She mentioned lead, fire code, and accessibility as requiring substantial investment.
 - iv. Mr. Hollenbeck said that he was looking to start a foundation similar to other nearby towns, similar to that used to fund the Mason Library project.
 - v. Mr. Leveille expressed concern for the project if it does not provide for the Town historical archives that have been overseen by the Historical Commission at Ramsdell since 1977.
- c. Mr. Fick said that he would write a letter of support for the Ramsdell project with the conditions that (1) the total project cost and ongoing operation expenses be endorsed by the Selectboard and (2) the storage of the Town historical archives by the Historical Commission continue to be accommodated in the building. All members agreed.

iii. Utility Box Graphics

- 1. Mr. Fick reported positive comments about the Utility Box Graphics at a recent Berkshire Regional Planning Commission meeting.
- 2. A motion was introduced by Mr. Leveille to pay \$3,125 from the Commission funds for half of the cost of the graphics. Ms. Bisiewicz seconded the motion. Mr. Howe explained that the Historic District Commission already voted to pay the other half of the cost from Historic District Commission funds. All voted to approve.

4. New Business

- Master Plan Task Review – Due to the lengthy discussion concerning the Ramsdell project, and that several members were on a time constraint to attend a meeting of the Historical

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Society, it was agreed that the Master Plan discussion would be deferred to the January meeting.

5. Other Member Issues – None.
6. Citizen's Speak – None.
7. Next Meeting Date – January 8, 2024, at 5:00 pm at a site to be determined.
8. Adjourn – Without objection, Mr. Fick adjourned the meeting at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Fick
Chair