

MINUTES
Working Meeting
LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION
January 2, 2019

A working meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Wednesday, January 2, 2018 11:00 a.m. in the LHC office on the top floor of the Prescott Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Jay Moody, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Michael Sczerzen, Karen Silverthorn

Absent: Amy Brown, Mark Schryver, Jean Watson

GUEST: Paula Castner

CALL TO ORDER:

Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 11:00 pm.

679 GEORGE HILL ROAD:

Heather Lennon reported that she had recently been contacted by a potential buyer who was requesting information/feedback from the LHC about the future of the 217 acre Hawthorn Hill Estate on George Hill. Lennon agreed to provide an update to the potential buyer after meeting with LHC members.

Guest Paula Castner reported on an offer she and her husband Timothy made for the entire property in February, 2018. Their vision was to create a Performing Arts Center/School, gardens and a network of trails on the property. Their offer was rejected, and, since then several others have also been turned down.

A plan drawn in September, 2018 shows a portion of the property divided into thirty-six house lots with the potential for fifteen more if the mansion house itself is demolished.

The discussion following included several concerns:

1. The Hawthorn Hill Estate, including the mansion and gardens is one of Lancaster's treasured historical assets and its destruction would be a great loss. The property is not currently on the National Register and getting it on would be difficult as several additional rooms were added on in the 1950's. Also, the request to get it on the Register would have to be initiated by an owner that was motivated to do so.
2. How would Lancaster town by-laws affect the development of the property? Would they need to be changed or amended to accommodate a developer's plan?
3. Would water and sewer resources be sufficient to accommodate the needs of such a development?

Jay Moody made a motion to send letters to the Trustees of the Reservation and Historic New England to see what their involvement might be. Joan Richards seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Joan Richards made a motion to send a memorandum to town planner Michael Antonellis requesting that any proposed zoning changes relating to the Hawthorn Hill estate be brought to the attention of the LHC prior to consideration at any Town Meeting. Jay Moody seconded the motion and the LHC voted unanimously to send a memorandum to the Planning Board, Town Planner, Assistant to the Town Planner, Town Administrator and the BOS. The LHC further agreed that it would be advantageous for any developer to consider an “Over 55” development so the impact on tax rates would be positive.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 12 noon, Jay Moody made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Joan Richards and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Working Meeting