

MEETING MINUTES

LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION

March 25, 2019

A meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Monday, March 25, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the LHC office on the upper level of the Prescott Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Amy Brown, Jean Watson

GUEST(S): Victoria Petracca, Win Clark

CALL TO ORDER:

Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Joan Richards made a motion to move agenda item #1 to the end of the meeting. Jay Moody seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

All agenda items other than #2 and #5 were tabled until the LHC's April meeting.

GOODRIDGE BROOK PROPOSED 40B DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE:

Heather Lennon introduced Victoria Petracca and Win Clark. Updated information was provided regarding the Goodridge Brook project along Sterling Rd. LHC members expressed concerns related to public safety as well as adequate sewerage service and water supply.

Victoria reported that the developer has approached the town of Clinton regarding allowing them to connect to Clinton's sewer resources. In turn, the Lancaster Sewer Commission (LSDC) has approached Clinton to express concern as it would raise rates for Lancaster sewerage users significantly. There is also concern about the infiltration of stormwater into the sewer system significantly increasing.

It was further reported that this matter is being discussed with the manufacturing companies on Sterling Road. These companies have serious reasons to be concerned since they have invested over \$45,000 of their own funds after a grant was awarded to the town of Lancaster from the state to develop and expand businesses in the town. It would be very unfortunate if these businesses were to leave town. Currently, there is talk of some of the industry considering relocating to Devens where better space may be available. It is hoped that the ZBA will not approve this project.

Much more information regarding this project is online. Residents were generally encouraged to attend the upcoming ZBA meeting on March 28th and make comments during the hearing process. The ZBA will have 40 days to render its decision following the closing of the required hearing.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN:

Victoria Petracca presented the Housing Production Plan 2020-2024 to LHC members.

She gave in depth background information and answered several questions posed by the members.

Concerns included, how affordable housing percentages are calculated by the state, the inclusion of senior housing in the plan and the amount already credited to Lancaster to meet the 10% requirement.

Questions have previously been raised about listing the long vacant Memorial School as potential future housing. It is thought by some that the school, built in 1956-7, was in violation of a restriction put on the property. It was brought up that a new title search will be made on the property to clear the matter up definitively.

Victoria mentioned the fact that though the building is vacant, it is an insurance expense to the town. The building has been vacant since 2002. Further, funds have already been invested by the installation of an elevator, a new roof put on and hazardous materials removed. Using the building for low-income housing would give the town more housing for veterans, seniors and the disabled. This would move the town's percentage closer to compliance with the State's requirement. This would place Lancaster in "safe harbor" related to 40B. More study needs to be done and more public sessions need to be offered to inform townspeople of ways to address the issue. The town does not plan to sell the land, and discussion of a lease to a non-profit was discussed. Presently, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is authorized to sign for a 30 year lease on town land, but, in this case, it was suggested that the rules be amended so the town could potentially offer a lease for 99 years.

Victoria also explained that State Article 97, voted in 1972, addresses amendments to deed-use restrictions. Questions were asked related to low-income housing and how the list of applicants would be formulated. The establishment of a committee to work toward accomplishing required amounts of affordable housing in Lancaster was also suggested.

Win Clark mentioned that the location of the proposed housing site was near many town offerings (e.g. the Senior Center and Community Center), churches and the recreational campus. This proximity makes the location an attractive one for low-incoming housing in his opinion.

Victoria also mentioned that she is having ongoing discussions with personnel at the Massachusetts Department of Capital Assets Management (DCAM) regarding the future of the Old Common Road State facility/campus which is currently deteriorating due to lack of use. Heather Lennon said she has been in communication with Derek Manning who has been working on the rehabilitation of the Abner Pollard House on the Robert Kennedy Action Corps (RFK) side of the campus. Sufficient funding is a major issue.

LHC members thanked the guests for attending and Joan Richards mentioned that it was the first time a group of citizens had come to speak to the LHC prior to the full development of a plan. Joan stated that usually plans are made and enacted with no input from the LHC. When commenting, Richards pointed out that she has been on the LHC since 1993.

MEETING MINUTES:

The March 4, 2019 LHC meeting minutes were read and corrections were made. Michael Sczerzen made a motion to accept them as corrected and Jay Moody seconded the motion. A vote was called for and the minutes were approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT AND FUTURE MEETING DATE:

A motion to adjourn was by made by Joan Richards at 8:10 pm. Karen Silverthorn seconded the motion, a vote was called for and it carried unanimously. The next meeting of the LHC is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the meeting.

LHC MEETING MINUTES 3-25-19 APPROVED