

MINUTES
LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION
March 28, 2016

A special meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Monday, March 28, 2016 at 131 Main Street, South Lancaster, in the Historical Commission Office. No regular meeting was held in March.

Members Present:

Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Michael Sczerzen, Garret Sheahan, and Karen Silverthorn
Absent: Jean Watson, Mark Schryver and Joan Richards, Associate Member
Guest(s): Ryan McNutt, Lancaster Town Administrator

CALL TO ORDER:

Michael Sczerzen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

UPDATES TO THE PRESCOTT BUILDING REHABILITATION PROJECT:

An "AD HOC" committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the Town Hall auditorium. Per Ryan McNutt, Peter Munro, Lancaster's Building Inspector, will discuss roof issues. Also, energy system issues will be discussed – currently leaning towards propane or electric baseboard heating. Lancaster's solar energy would benefit electric baseboard heating, but this doesn't go along with our green community.

The Town of Lancaster currently uses Osterman propane, but bids still need to go out.

Department Heads will have provided input on safes for the treasurer's office. Filing cabinet weights must be considered due to structural issues with weight. The design team needs to have all necessary information.

Between May and June, bids will go out for contracting.

At this time, no money has been budgeted to furnish the Prescott Building so the current furniture in use for Town Hall employees will be brought over from their offices. The LHC must find money for furnishings. We are free to seek what we need. The multi-purpose/research room will need a large table and several chairs.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE UPCOMING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS OF TOWN PERSONNEL:

BOS (Board of Selectmen) member Stanley Starr had previously given the LHC a breakdown of who conducts personnel reviews. Ryan McNutt will be doing reviews starting in April. Most town employee contracts are for three to five years. The police and fire chiefs have specialized contracts unlike the others. Probationary periods are generally between six and twelve months.

Ryan McNutt himself is scheduled for a performance review by the BOS on April 4, 2016. His hire date was August 17, 2014. He has now been on the job for nineteen months of his thirty-six month contract. Since former town administrator, Orlando Pacheco was terminated on June 30, 2014; there was an interim period between administrators.

Per an email to the BOS referencing Ryan McNutt, the LHC had expressed concerns that the town might be subject to IRS penalties if the borrowed monies are not being spent according to a required schedule Ryan McNutt quickly stated that the town will absolutely NOT have to pay any IRS penalties and that he, the town's chief financial officer and treasurer are carefully monitoring the situation.

The first allotment of money for the building must be spent down first. The town will meet the spending schedule requirements. The first payment is due by the end of June. Percentages of money to be spent can be gotten from Cheryl Gariepy. Ryan McNutt believes that we are "right on target" with the money.

A lack of communication and timely responses (if any response at all) by some town employees to emails and queries by the public or other town employees in need of answers and/or information was discussed. It was suggested that an in-service for town employees might be in order to insure professional communication practices. Ryan McNutt stated that he should personally be given specifics about communication shortfalls so that he can attempt to address them effectively.

Concerning the demolition of buildings in town, the LHC thinks it needs to be informed in advance to assure that nothing of historical significance is demolished without a chance to go in and take pictures. There is a demolition checklist that is generated through the building inspector's office but this has not always been presented to the LHC in advance resulting in many structures coming down without the LHC's advance knowledge. Once a building disappears, photographs serve as invaluable historical records; therefore, the courtesy of notification is very important.

When asked, Ryan McNutt confirmed that there is a part time Building Commissioner whose license covers the local building inspector who is not licensed.

LHC members expressed disappointment regarding the pace of progress on the Prescott Building Rehabilitation project over the last couple years. Further, the Commission was “blindsided” by a change of floor plans and the loss of floor space originally designated for them. Since they were not informed “up front”, it was considered a serious lack of communication. In response, Ryan McNutt flatly stated that he has the entire town of Lancaster to manage, not just the LHC and Prescott Building.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE MOVE OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO THE PRESCOTT BUILDING:

It was stated that the LHC was disappointed regarding the move to our newest location. A large fire-proof filing cabinet was damaged and the moving company was not contacted to “make good” on it. Ryan McNutt stated that it would not have been worth his time to pursue the matter.

LHC members want their next move (into the Prescott Building) to be done correctly and professionally in order to avoid having things like that happen again. The costs should be worked into an upcoming budget. Ryan McNutt gave LHC Chairman Sczerzen the task of looking into professional moving possibilities to get a “ballpark figure” of the potential cost. Michael Sczerzen is to get at least three quotes for Ryan McNutt.

Ryan McNutt stated that once the Prescott Building is 50% complete and six months before the move, a more accurate idea of the true costs will be apparent.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The regular meeting of the LHC scheduled for Monday, April 4 was cancelled. The next regular meeting will be Monday, April 25, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. Karen Silverthorn moved to adjourn. The move was seconded by Joy Peach.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Silverthorn and Heather Lennon
Recorders for the meeting