

Ipswich Historical Commission Minutes
Meeting February 10, 2020

Members in attendance: John Fiske, Gordon Harris, Lee Hathaway, Linda Grimes, Laura Gresh, Steve Miles

Alternate Members: Bill Effner

Also in attendance: Kristen Grubbs, Planning Department

Minutes January 13, 2020

Gordon motioned to approve minutes. Lee seconded the motion. All voted in favor

Budget

Kristen and Ethan presented proposed budget 2021 to Select Board and Fin Com.

A sum of \$975 was not spent of last year's budget. This money was designated for payment of an IHC archivist. Archivist was never hired.

\$975 will be carried over to fiscal year 2021.

Gordon said he would complete a job description for the position of Archivist for next meeting.

Gordon said \$1000 was used to purchase 4 plaques for Mary Conley Award recipients.

It was brought to attention of the group that Cape Ann Sign has not yet completed the Choate Bridge Interpretive standing plaque. Gary of Cape Ann Sign has had the completed and approved file for 9 months. Kristen agreed to look into the delay of Choate Bridge Sign.

Demolition Review

The IHC has a placeholder to present an article to the Select Board for a warrant to be voted on at the upcoming May Town Meeting. This article will amend the existing Demolition Review By-Law.

John explained that under "C" any request for a Demolition Review would mandate that it comes to the Planning Department and the chair of the IHC to determine if the building meets any of the criteria of historic significance as defined in the by-law. Numbers 1-4 state specific criteria for a building to be considered historically significant.

The existing bylaw defines a Significant Building as follows:

C. Significant Building - any building or portion thereof which:

1. Is in whole or in part 75 or more years old;
2. Is listed on, or is within an area listed on, the National Register of Historical Places, or is the subject of a pending application for listing on said National Register;
3. Is protected by a Preservation Agreement with the Commission or the Heritage Trust; or
4. Is determined by a majority of the Commission to be historically or architecturally significant in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a famous architect, or builder, or other historically significant person, event or process either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings. The Commission shall make such a determination within 10 days of receiving a

request, in hand or by certified mail, from the Building Inspector.

The proposal presented by the chairman for consideration was for the following definition change:

- C. Significant Building - any building or portion thereof which:
1. Is in whole or in part constructed before 1900; or
 2. Is listed on, or is within an area listed on, the National Register of Historical Places, or is the subject of a pending application for listing on said National Register; or
 3. Is protected by a Preservation Agreement with the Commission at a public hearing or the Heritage Trust; and
 4. Is determined by a majority of the Commission to be historically or architecturally significant in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a famous architect, or builder, or other historically significant person, event or process either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings.
5. Preferably-Preserved Significant Building - any significant building which the Commission determines, after a public hearing, as provided in § 138-3, is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated, rather than to be demolished.

A discussion followed of which grammatical conjunction -- "and" "or" -- be used in line 3 of the above change in order to be considered for historical significance by the Commission.

Currently by-law states if the building is more that 75-years-old it requires an IHC meeting to determined if the building is historically significant. A vote was taken at January IHC meeting to change this to a cut-off point of 1900 and this was approved.

The question that concerned several members of the IHC-- is -- what about historic buildings built from 1900 to 1930. There are buildings that fall within this time (1900-1930) could be lost with a cut-off date of 1900. The existing language with criteria 1-4 uses the conjunction "or" The Chairman's proposed change uses the conjunction "and." Changing the conjunction to "and" would be part of the revised bylaw.

Kristen suggested this could be remedied by changing the 75-year old date to a cut-off date to 1930 instead of proposed change to 1900.

Members who previously agreed to the 1900 cut-off date thought this the best remedy. By including these 1900-1930 buildings, a change in the language of the current by-law would not be required.

It was noted that at a previous meeting the 1930 cut-off date was voted on and approved by the IHC. After a lapse in time, there was another discussion in January and a vote was taken again for a by-law cut-off date of 1900. John Fiske felt the 1900 cut-off date would include all the important buildings. Some members expressed concern for buildings built from 1900-1930 and that they would be excluded from Demolition Review. Several buildings in town were mentioned that fell within this period, including the great estate on the property of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Gordon suggested adding a new line that would allow the chairman discretion regarding houses constructed after 1900, but John felt that this would not be acceptable to Town Meeting.

Gordon then made a motion to amend the proposed bylaw change from a cut-off date of 1900 to 1930 to include these buildings. Laura seconded the motion. John voted against. All others voted in favor. John

explained his vote against because he believed that any significant buildings built between 1900 and 1930 could be protected under C (4).

Thus the conjunction "and" would remain and cut-off date of 1930 would be proposed. This would protect the buildings that could be considered historically significant between 1900 and 1930, thus requiring a review of a Demolition Review by the IHC.

By-law 138-5 B

Proposed change from 10 days to 20 days for the number of days to have a public meeting for a Demolition Review request. The by-law states within 45 business days a public hearing is required.

This change would have all Demolition Reviews be heard at regularly scheduled IHC meeting.

New Business

Steve addressed concern about the \$4 million High Street project and the coordinating of all departments to include underground wiring in the project.

John said he would get in touch with Planning Board to coordinate discussions and make sure IHC and APD take part in the discussions.

2019 Mary Conley Award

Gordon said he would wait until ~~the~~ after the Town Meeting to present ~~the~~ 15 County Street to the Select Board. Gordon will deliver a 10-minute presentation to the Select Board re the history of 15 County Street.

Approval of Minutes for January 13, 2020

Gordon motioned to approve minutes. Lee seconded the motion. All voted in favor

Lee made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. John seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Gresh
Secretary

Minutes approved at IHC Meeting on 3-9-20