

**Orleans Historical Commission
Town Hall, 19 School Road, Orleans, MA 02653
Minutes**

January 12, 2022

4:30PM

Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

Virtual Webinar ID: 88002878852

Present Via Zoom Webinar: Ron Petersen, Joan Nix, Charles Ellis, John Harter, Bill Wibel and Edmund Marcarelli (alternate)

Also Present:

Mr. Petersen called the meeting to order at 4:30PM

Public Comment - There was no public comment.

Town Counsel Review of Historic District Bylaw

Mr. Petersen noted that despite Ms. Nix's best efforts, they had not yet received town counsel's review. Mr. Harter asked if there had been any indication that they might hear before the next meeting. Ms. Nix noted that she had sent all documentation on 12/13/21 and requested comments, she followed up 1/4/22 and then called Molly Bates on 1/11/22 and had received no comment back. It was noted that Mr. Ford had not responded to numerous boards. Mr. Harter and Ms. Nix agreed that there was no point in going to the select board without input from Town Counsel. Mr. Petersen stated that he had a meeting with Mefford Runyon regarding getting on the Select Board's agenda and would see if he had any comments on town counsel's availability to review their bylaw. It was noted that in an informal conversation, Mr. Ford had advised going the route of a 40C and that he may state that again. Mr. Petersen stated that the real concern in the delays was that the bylaw might not make a fall town meeting, were there to be one.

Historic District Presentation to Select Board

Not Applicable due to the delay in advice from town counsel. However, it was discussed that some work could be done to prepare regardless of that. Ms. Nix mentioned the Q&A that had been created that could be revised due to the changes that the committee had since made to the bylaw. It was noted that it was becoming harder to get the public involved in the Historic District and that the rumors would need to be dispelled on how this particular "historic district" would look. It was noted that the population had changed in Orleans, not only by increasing in size, but in a change in demographic. Mr. Wibel noted that the town government did not appear to be an ally to their committees' needs and were more focused on the overall politics of the town. Mr. Harter stated that for whatever restrictions their committee's bylaw might try to impose, there would be benefits for the entire community of Orleans.

Public Education Committee Report - Joan

Ms. Nix stated that she and Mr. Marcarelli would be meeting the next day with Desiree Cole to begin work on the website. She noted that one of the main things worked on the website would be direct links to MACRIS so that all information would constantly be up to date. Mr. Petersen urged anyone in the public to visit the historicorleans.org page and submit their comments and ideas.

Mr. Petersen noted that the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War was coming up and that the Orleans area had some incredible history from that time. He noted that this might make a good opportunity for educations to citizens. He also noted that a commemoration on the library lawn with the Select Board for the 225th anniversary of Orleans would be something to think about for summer 2022 as an educational opportunity.

CPC Report – Charles

Mr. Ellis reported on 8 projects in front of the CPC that were under historic preservation and that it was the historic commission's job to agree or disagree on the correctness of this statement. Mr. Harter noted that their committee had already certified the majority of these properties as having historical significance. Mr. Ellis went through the list: French Cable Museum, Federated Church, CHO – to take historic artifacts from several locations and move them to a storage facility in the HERD chapel, Old Firehouse. Mr. Petersen noted that the Old Firehouse building had been so modified and changed from its original form that he was unsure that it could be considered historic preservation, but more of a historic replication. His concern was that this project might not be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic rehabilitation. Ms. Nix agreed with Mr. Petersen and stated that she was confused on what work would be done in the proposed project. She noted that the application used the words rehabilitation and restoration interchangeably, but stated that these were two different words with different meanings. She noted that it was rare for a reconstruction to be publicly funded. Ms. Nix noted that the application did state that they would follow the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines, but Mr. Harter stated that it didn't seem like what they were proposing would be approved by CPC. Mr. Harter stated that he would be willing to deny this application or request more information. Mr. Ellis noted that their committee needed to have their findings in within one month of that day, and also noted that the Select Board had voted 5-0 to move this project forward. He suggested looking to Eric Dray and/or other towns to see how they had handled situations like this. He next suggested an on-site visit by someone on their commission so as to be fully aware of what they were dealing with. Lastly, he stated that he would like to let the Community Building Renovation Task Force come to the Historic Commission to present their case and make a decision at that time. Mr. Marcarelli questioned whether the CPC could do more than say yes or no and ask the Fire House project to be scaled down and Mr. Ellis said yes. He noted that this project was calling for a lot of money and that this project would take away from other projects. Mr. Harter noted that the Historic Commission acted as a "gate keeper" in this process and had the ability to deem a property historic or not. Mr. Marcarelli questioned whether the CPC had a specific allocation for each category. Mr. Ellis explained the 4 categories and stated that he believed each category had to be represented to a certain percent. Mr. Wibel noted that the CPC would look at recreation as the building was proposing to be used primarily for that. Mr. Harter asked Mr. Ellis to outline what exactly the Historic Commissions role was for the CPC. Mr. Ellis stated that he would, but that he felt it was pertinent to involve Eric Dray in this process. Mr. Marcarelli questioned whether or not their commission could ask the CPC to scale back the project and Mr. Petersen stated that their commission had the ability to render an opinion and that Mr. Ellis could relay that opinion. Mr. Petersen

noted that historic preservation used to receive more of the funding but more recently, the bulk of funding was going towards affordable housing and open spaces. Mr. Harter noted that the CPC funding had gone from supplemental income for the community to more of a basic budget item for serving the community. Ms. Nix noted that the funding came out of taxes, so that that wasn't necessarily an issue. It was agreed that the commission would move forward with Mr. Ellis's proposal and have a meeting in between if warranted. Mr. Petersen stated that the commission might want to consider separating their comments on the exterior vs. the interior. Ms. Nix stated that she felt that it came down to whether the building had integrity as a historic structure and she felt that it did not. Mr. Ellis noted that while the commission did not want to impede the town in their plans, but that it was their role to make the decision on whether or not this project was within the guidelines to receive CPC funding. Ms. Nix noted that it did seem that they were trying to replicate parts of how the building looked at a particular time, but that they were also building something new. Again, the commission agreed that the Community Building Renovation Task Force should be asked to come to the commission to present and that a more informed decision could be made after that. A discussion was had regarding the confusion surrounding what exactly the Community Building Renovation Task Force was looking to build.

Mr. Ellis stated that he would like to get consensus on all of the other projects independent of the Fire House.

John Harter moved to find the projects of: The French Cable Museum, The Federated Church, The North West School House, The CHO, and the two Orleans Historical Commission (one for \$11k and one for \$7.5k) approved by the Historical Commission, 2nd by Bill Wibel. The vote was 5-0-0 with Bill Wibel, Ronald Petersen, Joan Nix, John Harter and Charles Ellis all voting aye.

Upcoming meetings/Administrative Matters

Mr. Petersen stated that the commission had in hand an application for demolition of the structure at 8 Judah's Way and explained where this was within Orleans which was behind the main office of Nauset Marine and had a warehouse to its side. He noted that the legal ad had been printed and abutter letters had been mailed for Wednesday January 26th at 3PM for this public hearing. It was noted that a quorum could be established for that meeting. Mr. Petersen noted that the legal ad and letters had stated that it would be an in-person public hearing and Mr. Harter noted that should someone show up, the channel 18 rep. could make that person available via zoom to speak. Mr. Petersen noted that this structure where the commission had previously declined to impose a delay. Mr. Wibel asked what the structure had been used for, and Mr. Petersen stated that it was a house and he believed that the intention was to build a new house. Mr. Ellis suggested that the Community Building Renovation Task Force come to present that same date and the commission agreed.

Review/approve minutes

Ronald Petersen moved to accept the minutes for 12.8.21 emailed by Ashley Stucenski with one minor edit to the call to order. The vote was 5-0-0 with Bill Wibel, Ronald Petersen, Joan Nix, John Harter and Charles Ellis all voting aye.

There was a brief discussion to design standards and that something should be drafted. It was noted that Eric Dray should be reached out to for input.

Mr. Wibel asked Mr. Petersen to ask Mr. Runyon for his opinion on whether or not the commission should be involved in the conversation for the economic development for the downtown Orleans area.

Adjourn

John Harter moved to adjourn, 2nd by Bill Wibel. The vote was 5-0-0 with Bill Wibel, Ronald Petersen, Joan Nix, John Harter and Charles Ellis all voting aye. Meeting Adjourned at 5:55PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Stucenski
Recording Secretary