

MINUTES
Hamilton Historic District Commission / Historical Commission
September 13, 2018

Members Present: Edwin Howard, Chair, Elizabeth Wheaton, and Jack Hauck.

Anticipated Members Present: Katherine Mittelbush, Margaret Meahl and Kristen Weiss.

Staff Present: Dorr Fox

Ed Howard opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Jack Hauck made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2018 meeting. Elizabeth Wheaton seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

624 BAY ROAD

It was noted that 624 Bay Road is the yellow building next to the Congregational Church. Scott Johnson, representing the Congregational Church, noted that representatives of the Congregational Church came to the Hamilton Historic District Commission two years ago to discuss replacing the roof on the structure. The Hamilton Historic District Commission told the Church representatives that they wanted the roof retained as a wood roof. At the time, the estimates to replace the roof as a wood roof was \$67,000. Replacing it with an asphalt roof would have been \$37,000. Since the church did not have the money to replace the roof, they did not replace it. Now, two years later, the roof is in worse condition. They are concerned that it will fail and that there will eventually be water damage.

Mr. Howard inquired about the date the building was constructed. It was noted that it dated from either 1714 or 1715. Margaret Meahl questioned whether the entire building dated from the early 1700s. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hauck discussed the history of the building.

Mr. Howard inquired about the previous decisions that the Hamilton Historic District Commission has made regarding roofs. Mr. Fox noted that the Commission has not reviewed a roof replacement in the three years that he has been there. He noted that many of the roofs in the district have asphalt architectural shingles. However, since this is one of the oldest structures in the district, these roofs may not be an appropriate precedent. Mr. Howard stated that certain roofs may be appropriate for a later structure, but not an older structure. Mr. Hauck stated that there are four eighteenth century structures in the district. The other eighteenth century structures do not have wood shingle roofs. He believes that comparing the roof of the subject structure to other roofs in the district puts the Commission on shaky ground.

Ms. Wheaton stated an important issue is whether the proposed roof will fit in or detract from the appearance of the district. The slope and shape of the roof influence this determination. Whether the roof is an exact reproduction or whether it will be similar to other roofs in the district is an important consideration.

Mr. Hauck inquired about the roofing series that they are planning to use. He mentioned the Presidential series. He discussed whether one could tell whether there is wood grain from the street. Mr. Johnson stated that one could not see the wood grain from the street. One could see the wood grain from pictures taken by a drone flying over the roof. Mr. Hauck stated that he does not believe that one could tell whether there is wood grain from the street.

Mr. Johnson showed the Commission roof samples that they are considering. Mr. Howard noted that the Church's buildings are an important contribution to the historic district. He asked whether the Church committee had a favorite among the roof samples they presented. Mr. Johnson showed his preferred option. There was a discussion about whether they look like natural wood and shakes. Ms. Wheaton noted that they appear as if they want to look like natural wood shingles, and since they do not, they draw attention to themselves. Katherine Mittelbusher stated that the Presidential series looks modern. It does not look like a shake roof. Ms. Wheaton stated that if it is not a shake roof, it should not make the mistake of trying to look like a shake roof, and therefore draws attention to itself. Several people stated that they thought that the variation in color made the roof look like it was not authentic. It was noted that if the roof was darker it looked more appropriate than if it was lighter. Kristen Weiss noted that when one uses a material that is not wood, but intended to look like wood, the material calls attention to itself and does not look appropriate. Mr. Howard stated that some environmentalists prefer white roofs because they reflect the light.

Mr. Johnson stated that they are looking to create texture with the roof and do not want it to look flat. He continued to show the Commission samples of what the Church is considering. They have also looked at roofs on surrounding buildings. He stated that they are mindful of their preservation responsibility for their buildings and are aware that they have let the maintenance on their buildings lapse recently. He noted that the appropriate maintenance takes money. They are reluctant to spend all of their money on the roof when they need to do many other maintenance projects.

Ms. Weiss inquired whether they have looked into grants. Mr. Johnson explained that they have looked into the preservation grants of the Hamilton Community Preservation Committee. He noted that the current round of grants has just closed and that the earliest they could obtain funds would be July 2019. He is concerned that the roof will not last that long. He prefers not to wait for a grant that they are not certain would be granted.

Mr. Hauck stated that he was concerned about allowing the roof to be replaced as an asphalt roof because he was concerned about setting a precedent. However, he has

looked around the district and realizes that most of the roofs are asphalt and therefore the precedent has been set. Mr. Howard was uncomfortable about stating that a precedent has been set.

Mr. Fox noted that the current meeting was a pre-application meeting where they give advice to the applicant and that next month there will be a public hearing after an application is submitted.

Mr. Hauck suggested that the applicant not emphasize the cutting of costs in their application. They should make the case that they meet the requirements for project. Ms. Wheaton concurred and stated that the Commission would be approving a project based upon it not detracting from the historic character of the district. There is a concern if the only reason it is approved is for financial reasons. Mr. Johnson believes that it should be a consideration.

Ms. Wheaton inquired about the Church's preferred color for the shingles. Mr. Johnson stated that they selected a color that is called "weathered wood." There was a discussion noting that a darker roof would not draw attention to the fact that the roof was not wood and that the "wood" color over the entire roof may be visually jarring.

Mr. Fox inquired whether they wished to take a site visit to see the site and the roofs on surrounding buildings. Mr. Hauck stated that he thought a site visit might be good since his visit to the site convinced him that asphalt might be appropriate because the surrounding roofs are asphalt.

Ms. Wheaton stated that it appears that the Commission does seem to think that the roof needs to stay wood. Ms. Mittelbusher noted that the Commission seems to like the texture of the shingles, but is concerned about the variation in color of the shingles. More uniformity of color may be more appropriate. Ms. Wheaton noted that the variation in color does not necessarily show up on the sample, but when one looks at the photo of a large roof, it is apparent. Ms. Wheaton stated that they should select a specific roof shingle when they submit their application.

Mr. Howard inquired whether the state has guidance for this issue. He noted that other communities must have dealt with this topic in the past. Mr. Fox stated that he will ask the Massachusetts Historical Commission and others whether they have information about the topic. Mr. Hauck stated that this building and its roof should be judged on its own merits. It has a shallow peak, which is not typical of other roofs. If they had a site visit, one could tell that it is difficult to see much of the roof.

There was a discussion on the timing of the installation of the roof. Mr. Johnson noted that they wish to install it this fall and that they have been discussing this with a few contractors. It was noted that they would like to have a public hearing soon. Mr. Fox noted that the earliest a public hearing could be held would be October 11th. There was a question whether there needed to be a public hearing. It was stated that a public hearing was required.

There was a discussion about whether a member could vote if they missed a hearing or a meeting. There was a question of whether the bylaws on the Town website were current. Mr. Fox stated that they were. Mr. Fox stated that the requirement regarding attendance only applies to hearings and not meetings. This is true for all boards. There is a provision where a member can miss a hearing and review the video or read the minutes and still vote. Mr. Fox will look into this topic.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Howard welcomed the new members onto the Commission. He inquired about the Selectmen appointing them to the Commission. Mr. Fox explained that the Selectmen were not sure whether the Commission followed the requirements for soliciting new members and therefore did not appoint them. It is anticipated that they will be appointed at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Howard stated that he and Mr. Hauck had a discussion and determined that they would like to have a two hour discussion on the role of the Commission and policies and guidelines to address preservation issues, such as wheelchair ramps and roofing materials. There was a question regarding whether there were guidelines for the district. Mr. Fox noted that there was a town bylaw regarding the historic district and demolition delay.

There was a discussion regarding who would be the official alternate on the Commission. Mr. Hauck made a motion that Ms. Mittelbusher, Ms. Weiss and Ms. Meahl be the full voting members and that Scott Clements be the alternate. Ms. Wheaton seconded the motion. Ms. Mittelbusher volunteered to be the alternate. Ms. Wheaton modified the motion to have Ms. Mittelbusher be the alternate. Mr. Hauck accepted this modification. All of the members voted in favor of the modified motion.

Ms. Wheaton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Hauck seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.