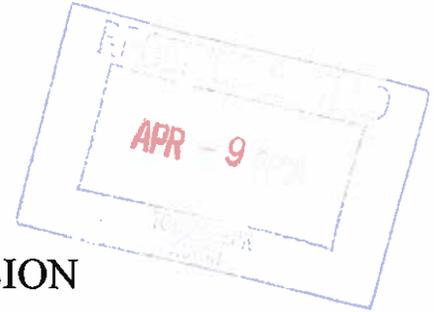




MASSACHUSETTS 01720

ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Acton Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2009
7:30 p.m., Acton Town Hall, Rm. 121

AHC Members Present: Peter Grover, chair (PG), Anita Dodson, Kimberley Connors-Hughes, Victoria Beyer, Bill Dickinson (BD), Brad Maxwell

1. PG called the meeting to order and commenced discussion of efforts to preserve the Wright-Holden Farmhouse (WHF). Also in attendance and participating in this discussion were Anne Forbes (AF), Carol Dwyer (CD), Win Wilbur (WW), Georgess Burrow and Tom O'Neill. In addition, Anne Dodge, the Preservation Massachusetts Circuit Rider, was present for the WHF discussion.
 - a. AF related details of meeting with Paul Ruane and John Larson and others at the Department of Corrections (DOC); CD, Karle Packard and Susan Mitchell-Hardt also attended. In particular, there was significant support and enthusiasm for two prison-related uses: (1) pre-release center or (2) administrative offices (may be required for relocation of Route 2). BD noted that this may raise problems for fundraising because people may think that the government should be funding the renovation effort.
 - b. CD noted that there was an assumption that the east chimney would need to be removed and rebuilt. AF asked what materials were needed and was told that DOC needs ice and water shield. DOC already has new roof shingles, but we do not know what type of shingles they are. KCH noted, and it was generally agreed that if this preservation group is raising money for the renovation, it should have a say in the appearance/materials used.
 - c. Anne Dodge noted that the Shaw Foundation and "reentry.org" are good resources for getting background/case studies on the reentry use. Anne recommended that we first get DOC on board with the reuse in general and then get a blueprint/report together for moving forward with stabilization/rehabilitation steps (perhaps with a preservation consultant's help, and including engineering considerations, plans and photos). WW noted that the present NEC commissioner is very enthusiastic about reentry, and would be an ally in this context. Anne Dodge suggested that a series of perhaps 3 meetings with DOC/NEC would be optimal, to establish buy-in, timing, next steps. WW volunteered to act as a liaison to the DOC/NEC.
 - d. Anne Dodge also noted several possible grants that could be used, including Preservation Massachusetts "mini-grants" (for assessment/rehab) and possibly grants from 1772 Foundation. We would need the "blueprint" first, though. AF/CD noted that "green" reuse in this way would be a good selling point as well.

- e. CD noted that there is a former owner's family waiting to donate money to the project, and we need to establish a way to hold donations. CD and PG contacted Al Collins from Shirley about his offer to see if his organization will act as a non-profit sponsor. Based on responses, it appeared as though that assistance was better suited to larger donations and would not be a permanent option. PG explained the current setup for donations at Concord Lumber.
2. Next followed the Commission's public hearing on demolition application for "Prescott Barn" and "Dollhouse" buildings on Powder Mill Road in East Acton. Landowner/applicant Leo Bertolami (LB) was in attendance. PG noted that several historic structures are now vacant and may be planned for demolition (Prescott/Dollhouse buildings in East Acton).
 - a. Dollhouse: LB related the background (fire department wants a ramp from adjacent property that would require removal of the Dollhouse structure; LB already installed stairs and a new hydrant). LB would like to move the structure to #2 Weatherbee (without the 1960s shed attached to the back), and says that there was no way to move the house within the property without getting relief from zoning/building requirements. LB has heard that there may be a site/need for the house in South Acton, near the train station. The Commission preferred to keep the structure on Powder Mill Road if possible. PG agreed to talk to Roland Bartl regarding options for moving within the property, and to investigate other options in South Acton. LB said that he would move the house within the lot (to other side of "bait shop") if it would be approved.
 - b. Prescott Barn: LB noted that the foundation is falling through, water damage, and Frank Ramsbottom (FR) walked the site and thought there would be issues with leaving some of the structure standing. PG suggested that any rebuilding effort should retain the same mill-style, and gave examples. LB noted that he planned to use the same foundation location if possible, at about 75% of the current size. PG agreed to talk with FR about the structure.
 - c. The Commission asked LB to submit plans for both demolitions/rehabilitations. At conclusion of the hearing, the Commission voted unanimously to impose a demolition delay on the demo permit applications, in order to explore alternatives to demolitions with LB.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Maxwell, clerk pro tem

Cc: Town Clerk
Town Manager
Town Library