

Town of Harwich
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Historic District and Historical Commission
732 Main Street, Harwich, MA
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY

I. Call to order

Members and Staff Present: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Julia Eldredge, Jeanne Steiner, Brendan Lowney, and Bob Doane.

Others Present: Brooks Academy Museum Commission Representative, David Spitz, and Cemetery Commission Representative, Robin Kelley.

Chairperson Mary Maslowski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Public Hearing - NONE

III. Public Meeting

A. New Business

1. Community Preservation Commission (CPC) Articles for Annual Town Meeting
 - a. Brooks Academy Museum Commission - Brooks Academy Structural Improvements

David Spitz presented the proposed project. The project included a low impact elevator, a basement storage area for historic artifacts and documents that is climate controlled, and moving the entrance to the building to its historic location under the columns on the North end of the building. A structural engineer did inspect the building at the request of the CPC, who was recommended by Sarah Korjeff. They found that the building looked pretty good, except for the foundation. The options to repair the foundation will cost over \$1.2 million to repair the foundation and create a full basement, over \$900,000 to fix the basement and create a basement under half the space, or \$500-600,000 to do only repairs. Ms. Spitz argued that the basement space would be extremely valuable to not only the museum but the Town as well, and explained that that was why he requested the full amount from the CPC. Mr. Spitz goes on to explain that the building should be fully operable during construction. The foundation will be a brick-faced foundation, to match the original foundation, and the original brick will be preserved and reused where possible.

Mr. Doane asked if the application would be updated to reflect the entire amount, as it currently requests only \$785,000. Mr. Doane did support the full basement option. Mr. Spitz responded that they have applied for at least the half-basement option, but would be happy to ask for the full amount. Mr. Doane encouraged him to ask for the full amount. Mr. Spitz responded that they may apply for other available grants to complete the project, totaling up to \$350,000, but they may request the entire amount from CPC. Mr. Spitz explained that the engineer did recommend some work on the columns on the building as well.

Ms. Eldredge agreed with Mr. Doane that they should ask for the full amount.

Ms. Steiner asked if there were some items from other organizations that would also be stored in the space. Mr. Spitz responded that he was not 100% sure but if the space was available they would absolutely try to accommodate it. Ms. Steiner also urged him to request the full amount.

Ms. Maslowski agreed that they should request the whole amount, and commented that the grant timing may be fast enough that the amount could be amended before Town Meeting if they did receive the grant funding.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Maslowski called for a vote to support the project.

Ms. Steiner moved to support the Brooks Academy Museum CPC application for Option C, including a full basement and foundation repairs. Seconded by Ms. Eldredge. Motion carried 5-0.

- b. Cemetery Commission - E. H. Methodist Gravestone Conservation & Preservation and Historic Restoration of Fence & Posts at E. H. Methodist Cemetery

Robin Kelley presented the first project is for the preservation of 65 total gravestones at the West Harwich E.H. Methodist Cemetery. Of the two projects, Ms. Kelley stated that this is the project that needs to take priority as a lot of the gravestones have been neglected for years, and many are leaning which increases the risk of damage to the stones.

Mr. Doane agreed that the gravestone restoration is important. Ms. Kelley explained that a lot of research goes into each stone as well to establish historic dates and owners. Ms. Steiner commented that this is an important project, for not only the families of those that have passed away but for the entire town. Mr. Lowney was in favor of the project. Ms. Eldredge was also in favor of the project.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Maslowski called for a vote to support the project.

Ms. Eldredge moved to support the Cemetery Commission CPC application for gravestone restoration at the Methodist Cemetery for \$102,000. Seconded by Mr. Lowney. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Kelley presented the second project which is for stony creek granite posts at the Cemetery. Ms. Kelley explained the rare nature of the specific granite used for the posts and why it is more expensive. There are 24 granite posts in the Cemetery that are worn down or cracked, and the second application is to replace these posts and the galvanized pipe, as well as to control the vegetation around them to prevent the damage from recurring.

Ms. Steiner stated that preservation of the older cemeteries is a worthwhile cause. Mr. Lowney stated that the safety issue of the rusted pipes is a good enough reason to support this project for him. Ms. Eldredge stated her support for the project. Mr. Doane asked if the galvanized pipe used in cemeteries came about. Ms. Kelley responded that she isn't sure why the pipe was used, but she thinks that it was to keep out larger animals, and the pipe is very popular in many cemeteries throughout New England. Mr. Doane stated his support for the project.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Maslowski called for a vote to support the project.

Ms. Eldredge moved to support the Cemetery Commission CPC application for restoration of the granite posts and galvanized pipe, with priority given to the first Cemetery Commission CPC application for gravestone conservation and preservation. Seconded by Ms. Steiner. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Doane asked Ms. Kelley if the third CPC project, which is for flagpoles, would fall under Historic of Recreation. Ms. Kelley responded that it would fall under Recreation because this would create a park. Ms. Kelley also explained that they would be creating civil and revolutionary war memorials as part of this project, which would fall under Historic purview once that part of the project was ready to come before CPC in the future.

B. Updates from Commission Members

Ms. Maslowski asked Mr. Doane to give an update on CPC. Mr. Doane explained that the only Historic CPC application that had come up was the Brooks project, but the other applications would be discussed soon.

Ms. Maslowski gave an update that herself and Ms. Steiner would be meeting with Administration for the Demolition Delay Bylaw, and would give an update to the Commission after that meeting.

Mr. Doane asked for an update on the Royal project at 628 Bank Street from the Planning Board, and whether it was being applied for as a 40B or a standalone project. Ms. Maslowski stated that it would need to be standalone to go before the Planning Board. Mr. Doane asked that they make it known to them that they will need to come before the Historic Commission for approval as well since they are in the Historic District.

IV. Adjourn

Hearing no other comments or updates, Ms. Maslowski called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Doane moved to adjourn at 6:43 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Lowney. Motion carried 5-0.