

TOWN OF ASHLAND  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MEETING DATE: May 11, 2021

MEETING NOTES:

Members in attendance:  
(Voting Members only)

Tom DeAlmeida  
Elizabeth Childress  
Joanna Sorensen  
James Neilsen  
Karen Coleman  
Kelly Flannery  
Jennifer Paratore

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm

Meeting held remotely via Zoom\*\*\*: following the guidelines set forth by Gov. Baker back in May 2020 dealing with the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Chairman DeAlmeida called the meeting to order and the meeting minutes from the previous meeting, April 13, 2021, were unanimously accepted by the members in attendance

DeAlmeida reviewed the week's agenda. First item was the demolition permit for 438 Chestnut Street. In accordance to town by-laws, any demolition permits for properties built before 1940 need to appear before the Historical Commission to determine if there is any historical significance to the property that would prevent it from being demolished. Alex Mulcahy, the attorney for the property owner, and Carolyn Piers, daughter of the property owner, were in attendance. DeAlmeida said that he wanted to address alleged comments from the family of the property owner who accused him of personally holding up the sale because he questioned the demolition permit at a previous HC meeting. He said the accusations are untrue. He stated that he was only ensuring that the demolition request went through the proper channels and that the Historical Commission was able to do their research to determine any historical significance. After speaking to Cliff Wilson from the Ashland Historical Society, DeAlmeida said he believes the home has no value to the town and has no problem with the demolition. J. Neilsen said that he believes the home was part of a larger parcel years ago but that the home itself has no architectural value and did not have any historically significant residents as far as he knows. J. Paratore added that she has no objection to the demolition and that the property is not on the town's historic property list. Mulcahy and Piers were given the opportunity to speak. Mulcahy agreed with what had already been said and had nothing further to add. Cliff Wilson from the Historical Society was also in attendance and said that he had no objections. DeAlmeida put the demolition permit request to a vote and it was accepted unanimously by all members of the HC in attendance. Paratore said that she would provide written notice to the building department that the HC had no objections.

Next on the agenda was Historical Commission community engagement. L. Childress spoke to Selectman Steve Mitchell about setting up a table for the HC at the Ashland Farmer's Market. She said Mitchell thought it was a great idea but wasn't sure how things would be operating at the Farmer's Market under the state's current covid restrictions. Childress said that she would follow up with Mitchell in the next few weeks to see if he had a better idea of how things would be run this year and get more information on setting up a booth. J. Paratore said that she contacted Beth Reynolds at the Town Hall to inquire about using the Corner Spot for a Historical Commission meet and greet this summer. Paratore was just waiting for a response and would update the HC at the next meeting.

The final discussion item on the agenda was the Mill Buildings downtown. DeAlmeida said he wants to look into putting the buildings on the Historical Register. Neilsen asked if the owner of the buildings had to agree to adding the buildings to the Historical Register. K. Coleman said that based on her experience with a church in Somerville, the owner doesn't have to agree. She said a member of the Historical Commission in Somerville knew the process on how to get buildings accepted and got the church registered without consulting them and that they were subjected to new restrictions based on the designation. Neilsen wanted to know how far along they are with their plans for the mill buildings and believes that it is still a few months away from appearing before the Historical Commission. DeAlmeida said that he had some free time and would do research on how we can get the buildings on the National Register and will update the group next meeting.

With no other matters to discuss, Chairman DeAlmeida made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Neilsen. Vote 7-0.

**Next meeting JUNE 8th, 2021 AT 7PM.** Adjournment 7:53pm