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Geri Doyle, Chairperson
Angelia Christopher
Administrative Assistant

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday December 15, 9:00 AM

VIA Virtual Conferencing

In accordance with An Act To Implement Provisions Necessary to the Health, Welfare and Safety of the Citizens of Maine in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, as enacted to read: Sec. G-1 1 MRSA §403-A Public proceedings through remote access during declaration of state of emergency due to COVID-19

- 1) **Call Meeting to Order-** Chair Doyle called the meeting to order at 9:05 am
- 2) **Roll Call- Chair** Geri Doyle, Robert Lash, Robert Abbey, Janet Slade. Clare Marron, Brian Coombs and Dennis Doiron were not able to attend. Others present- Kris McNeill- CEO, Christine Landes- City Manager, Paul Golden, Gil Raviv, Jon Pottle, and Angelia Christopher- Planning and Development Assistant.
- 3) **Review of meeting minutes from 11/17//2020** –Chair Doyle asks if there are any changes requested to the minutes from 11/17/2020. No. Robert Lash makes a motion to accept the minutes as written. Janet Slade seconds the motion. Roll Call vote. Geri Doyle yes, Robert Lash yes, Kris McNeill yes and Janet Slade yes. All in favor except for Robert Abbey, who abstained because he was not present for that meeting.
- 4) **The Board will review the proposal to add Arthur’s Meadow- 266 Highland Ave to the sites that are designated as historically important.**

Board members are here to look at this, and to make a final check on the proposal. Chair Doyle asks if Board members feel they can look at this proposal without bias- yes. All board members agree they will review it.

Kris McNeill- CEO tells the board that property, this field, is the location for a proposed development. The developers for the project inquired to the State HPC, which came back with no known archeological significance. They came back with no known archeological significance. City historian, Dawn Thistle, looked into it, and traced it back the property back as far as she could. She found that there was a family cemetery on the property that was reportedly moved, despite no record of where it was moved to. She stated that there is history on this lot, by way of rural agricultural, but that does not necessarily mean that it warrants preservation by the Historic Commission.



Applicant, Gil Raviv, tells the board that he recently had a conversation with the family that lived near this property for many years. The Gosline's reported that there were bodies buried in the field, in the exact location of the suspected cemetery. There is an old foundation, which is supposedly the inspiration for an EA Robinson poem. There are arrowheads that are rumored to be found in the field, which could be from one of the five tribes. There is a man from Bates that wants to explore this further. Mr. Raviv states that it has been taking a long time to mark all the historical sites, so for the sake of cautiousness, the abutting neighbors of this property, would like to try to preserve it. Robert Lash, asks, "This is the first piece of land with no improvements, what exactly is our role as the HPC committee? Chair Doyle reports that they are checking for merit on the request. Robert Abbey, states that the park was reported as part of the historic district, and the fountain can be included in another six years. He goes on to report that Dam #1 was going to be taken down by DOT, but it was deemed archeologically significant. He states that HPC, at the state level, will not consider this request unless there is documentation to back it up. All there is for this proposal is hearsay. If HPC has already denied the proposal, stating that it was not significant, then it likely is not.

Clare Marron suggests that Kennebec Land Trust, might be an option, to keep an open space, etc. Clare Marron states that the HPC is supposed to review the projects in the historic district, so how does this fit in. Jon Pottle, City Solicitor, adds 'Where this is an out of the ordinary request, the Gardiner Ordinance provides the feature to listen to requests such as this. The ordinance requires that consideration should be done, the area researched and a report of findings be presented to Maine Historic Preservation. He feels that the role of this HPC board is not necessarily binding. Robert Lash, asks if in this case, this property is being requested by an abutter, not the owner. Jon Pottle replies with 'the ordinance does not require the property owner to be the person that makes the request'. He states that this is a private lot, that could be the home to a proposed a solar project. Mr. Pottle states that Maine's HPC decision is not necessarily binding as there might be additional info the state is not aware of. If new info came forward from a reputable source, with documentation, then it would warrant further research. Kris McNeill reports that would require the city to contract with an archeologist, to research this land. If there is new, documented, info then it would warrant it, but there is not. Mr. Raviv reports that by chat, the Kennebec Land Trust is interested, buying the land, but they can only offer a reasonable fee. He also feels that archeological excavation should be done to check for historical significance.

Clare Marron states that she feels there is not enough new evidence to warrant further investigation. Kris McNeill states the he feels that this is the consensus. Jon Pottle states that if they feel they have done the appropriate due diligence, then they should be so inclined to make a decision. Chair Doyle asked Mr. Raviv who stated that there were bodies buried on the property. Mr. Raviv stated that it was Mrs. Shirley Gosline. Mr. Raviv reports that he was told that there are reported graves with no markers or stones on the property now.

Chair Doyle states that even if the Commission felt that this application has warrants, it would likely have to be a bigger entity to approve tax payers funding the study.

Chair Doyle asks if they have to vote on this proposal. Jon Pottle states if they have a recommendation, they should vote on it. Mr. Raviv inquires about City Manager, Christine Landes opinion on this matter. She states it is not in her role to report to the commission, she is here to report to council.



Mr. Abbey and Mr. Lash both state that there is nothing here to report to HPC, no significant change. Clare Marron agrees. The commission feels that they need more info, by way of documentation. If a concrete form of documentation were to come up, the Board would have not problem with endorsing this proposal. The consensus of the board is that they feel there not enough evidence for the National Park service to further explore

Recommendation- Clare look for more recommendation, bring it back, and they will review it. Janet needs concrete info. Kris states the recommendation needs to refer to the City.

Jon Pottle suggested a motion: Based on the information available, which includes correspondence, studies and research investigation regarding the subject property, the commission finds that based on that information, it is not recommended to continue with the designation process. In light of the material that the commission looked at regarding those types of properties and that if this commission. City Council, or any resident property owner discovers or obtains new information they can certainly present that at a future date for consideration Robert Lash moves to take that suggestion as a motion. Janet Slade seconds the motion. Roll call vote. Robert Lash- yes, Robert Abbey- yes, Clare Marron- yes Janet Slade- yes, Chair Geri Doyle- yes. All in favor

Robert Abbey states when the common was designated, they worked with a person at HPC Maine He states that the applicant should reach out to Maine HPC to find out exactly what they need to do, to designate this a as historically significant. Robert Abbey states that the interested parties will need to do independent studies, unless City Manager Christine Landes feels it needs to go to City Council.

5) Paul Golden- 300 Water Street, his application has already been approved, however while doing the work, he discovered a window that was rotten, and needed immediate replacement. He comes before the board today, to ask to replace this window with an Anderson Woodrite 400 series. Mr. Golden wants to get this completed before winter weather kicks in. Robert Abbey makes a motion that we amend the original application dated-11/19/2019, to install an Anderson 400 series Woodrite clad window. Janet Slade seconded the motion. No further discussion. Roll Call vote, Robert Lash- yes, Robert Abbey- yes, Clare Marron- yes Janet Slade- yes, Chair Geri Doyle- yes. All in favor

6) Other- none at this time

7) Adjourn- Robert Abbey made a motion to adjourn at 9:50am. Clare Marron seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Robert Lash- yes, Robert Abbey- yes, Janet Slade- yes, Clare Marron- yes, Chair Geri Doyle- yes. All in favor