

Meeting of the Mendham Township Historic Preservation Committee
Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
Town Hall

Members in Attendance: Vanessa Brown, Corey Holquist, Melissa Saharko (*participating by phone*), Patricia Zimmerman

Other Attendees: Amalia Duarte, HPC's representative on the Township Committee

Vanessa called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Last month's meeting minutes were approved.

Verizon Nodes

Pat gave an update on Adrian's latest communications about the Verizon nodes, which has been sent to all the committee members via email. One pole location, on Roxiticus Road, is very close to the road and on a dangerous curve. We have discussed moving it behind the nearby fence. Verizon reports that the owner would have to move the fence and provide access to the pole for technicians. Regarding any plantings around the ground furniture, Verizon says that the plantings must be approved by the Township. The group asked who would maintain the plantings.

The group discussed the fiberglass vs. traditional poles. Adrian provided the location of two fiberglass poles in North Brunswick. Melissa will be driving by there on Friday and will stop to take photographs.

The group discussed asking for a donation from Verizon. It was suggested that Verizon could fund the new historic district signs. Everyone agreed this is a good idea.

Vanessa asked how other jurisdictions have handled the installation of the nodes. Vanessa emphasized that the Committee wants to make a decision soon and bring the issue to a close.

Another factor affecting the timeline is the new FCC rule taking effect on July 1st. We believe this rule will take power away from local committees regarding node placement. Melissa offered to speak to some connections she has at the FCC. It was suggested that it might be wise for the Township to pass an ordinance giving some oversight protection in the event communications providers, in the future, propose placing additional nodes in Township historic districts.

Union Schoolhouse Bridge

Pat continues to look for the old photographs of the bridge for the DOT sign. She has exhausted all the archives and has not yet been able to locate them.

Historic Records

Melissa gave an update on the archives project. She and Pat recorded the contents of another filing cabinet and a map box in the town vault. There are four additional map boxes in the vault

and the room at the elementary school left to search. Melissa and Pat will continue to work on the archives and record what they find.

Vanessa asked if this would make a good project for high school volunteers. Melissa said that we could easily create some volunteer opportunities for high school students or anyone who is interested.

Pitney

Amalia gave the group an update on Pitney. She noted that the Township paid for an architectural historian to view the site and give their opinion. The historian determined that the site has no historical value. That doesn't mean it has no value to the township.

Amalia said an ordinance would be presented at the next Township Committee meeting outlining three options for requesting bids for the site: 1) buying it as-is, 2) buy the property with the Township demolishing the buildings, or 3) buying the property with demolition and rezoned to allow for denser development.

The group discussed touring Pitney. Amalia said that the environmental commission may also be interested in touring.

Additional Committee Members

Our ordinance allows us to have two additional committee members. The group discussed members of the community who have expressed an interest in serving on the committee. The group also discussed members of the community who would provide value and depth of knowledge to the committee, such as Bob Prucell from the Ralston Historical Association or someone from the Borough preservation group.

Student Volunteer Opportunities

Amalia expressed her desire to create opportunities for high school students to serve on Township committees. The group agreed it would be a great opportunity and discussed offering a scholarship to any student member.

Master Plan Element

The group agreed to table this discussion until the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Committee will be on August 1, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.