

*Royalston Historic District Commission*  
*Royalston, Massachusetts, 01368*

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 15, 2019

Attendees: Peter Kraniak (chair), Andy West, Matthew Valliere, Pierre Humblet (secretary), Roger O'Donnell . All were voting members.

Peter opened a meeting a few minutes after 7:30 PM.

Other commission matters

Town hall addition

Earlier in August the rear addition of the Town Hall was covered with wide artificial shiplap planks although the architect's plan presented at public hearing in 2012 and approved by the HDC and by the building inspector specified "*wood clapboard shall match existing*". The HDC requested explanations. Selectboard member Chris Long and Project manager Kevin Flynn were present to provide them.

Kevin stated that at the April 18, 2019 HDC meeting, which he attended, the HDC had verbally authorized the Selectboard to choose whatever cladding option it preferred. The HDC members who were present at that meeting disputed this assertion. They claimed that the HDC had requested architect's drawings showing what the new proposal would look like. This latter version is also reported in the April 18, 2019 HDC minutes.

The Selectboard member and Mr. Flynn also said that they did not know that changes to an approved application had to be requested and approved in writing. They added that the project had to be completed by the end of September in order to be reimbursed by the state, and that there was neither time nor money available to redo the work as initially specified. Several HDC members pointed out that the action of the Town was destroying the credibility of the HDC as home owners could now feel they can make unauthorized changes and then claim ignorance or make excuses based on time or money.

The HDC members and their visitors went outside to look at the buildings. The new design does not make a clear distinction between the original building and the addition, which was the purpose of the original design. However, no one found the new design to be incongruous to the character of the Historic District. Andy suggested that the Town applies for a change to the issued certificate, on grounds of financial hardship.

Back inside the building, Kevin Flynn composed a request to change the initial certificate of appropriateness on hardship grounds, and submitted it. Several clarifications were requested and effected. Andy then motioned to accept the request as amended. XXX seconded. All voted in favor except Pierre who abstained. Certificate 2012-11-1D.

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## Stockwell Rd

While Mr. Flynn was composing the amendment mentioned above, Leslie Freudenheim of 5 Stockwell Rd appeared at the meeting to present the case of the adjacent property at the 4 Stockwell Rd. That property contains the Stockwell House, a pre-revolutionary house in close-to-original condition, carefully renovated by the late husband of the current owner. It also contains an original Royalston schoolhouse, which was moved there and made habitable, as well as an old barn relocated from New Hampshire. The property is reportedly under a purchase agreement with another neighbor and Ms. Freudenheim fears that historic structures might be lost. She wonders if the HDC could act, possibly its Historical Commission capacity.

She also wondered if the Town would accept the relocation of the Stockwell house to the front of the Raymond School (with the moving paid by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties), as the Historic District is lacking an early building in its original condition. She is also making efforts of her own to have third parties help move the structures to safe sites.

Various HDC members made the following points

- The HDC can only act on properties located in the current Historic District
- Protecting the Stockwell Rd buildings would require the creation of a new historic district. That is a long process that would require a vote of the Town Meeting and that is unlikely to succeed without the support of the property owner.
- In general, it is unlikely that the town would take responsibility for more historic structures, and the lawn in front of the Raymond School does not appear to be an appropriate fit for the Stockwell House.
- If a non-profit institution were to acquire the buildings, either on the current site or on another site, state and private funding sources might be available to help maintain them.

Ms. Freudenheim then asked if the Historical Commission would write to the purchaser, to point out the historic value of the buildings. Andy said that it was not appropriate to act based on the potential sale of the property, but that the commission might consider doing so if the sale were to occur.

## Old applications

Application 2019-07-1 to change the “skin” of the old schoolhouse cupola from aluminum to copper. Abutters were notified and none has requested a public hearing. After a brief discussion, Roger motioned to issue a certificate of appropriateness and Andy seconded. All voted in favor, except Peter who abstained.

## Minutes

The minutes of Apr 18, 2019 had been distributed before the May meeting, but they were never approved as that meeting was cancelled. The members read them and made minor corrections. Roger motioned to approve the amended minutes. Andy seconded. All voted in favor.

The members also read the minutes of July and made several small corrections. Roger motioned to approve the amended minutes. Andy seconded. All voted in favor except Andy who abstained as he was not present at that meeting.

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Meeting adjourned

Roger motioned to close the meeting. Matthew seconded. All voted in favor. Peter closed the meeting at 9:25 P.M.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "P.A. Humblet". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large, stylized "H" at the end.

Pierre A. Humblet  
RHDC Secretary