

Royalston Historic District Commission
Royalston, Massachusetts, 01368

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 6, 2020

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, this meeting was held remotely. It took place on a Zoom Conference hosted by Selectboard chair Deb D'Amico. The call-in information was indicated in all meeting notices. The written material had been distributed by e-mail. All votes were taken by roll call.

Public Hearing

At 7:41 PM Peter opened the public meeting on an application by the Town of Royalston to demolish the chimney of the Raymond School.

Attendees were HDC members Peter Kraniak (chair), Bob Casinghino (late), Pierre Humblet (secretary), Roger O'Donnell, as well as Jim Barclay, head of the building committee, Deb D'Amico, Becky Krause-Hardie, and Stephen Chase.

The discussion was not linear, the same points being touched several times. The account below attempts to summarize them in a logical manner.

Jim explained that the plan for the building is to be green, super insulated, and heated with a heat pump. Thus, there will never be a need for the chimney anymore. The town may be able to demolish the chimney and patch the roof with free labor, whereas keeping the chimney would require building an isolated box costing \$4,000 to 6,000 around it and redoing the chimney flashing. Overall, the cost would be less than \$10,000.

Currently the town barely has the money to redo the roof. Transforming into office space would cost at least 2M\$. The Building Committee has the responsibility to house the employees and allow the Town government to run in a resilient manner. The cheapest way to do that would be to build an office building at a new site. However, that is balanced by the desire to maintain the visual perspective of the Common. The committee hopes to raise funds allocated for green projects and to support the continuity of government. If they cannot be raised, the building may be sold or abandoned. Keeping the chimney would then add a source of vulnerability and lead to faster decay. Jim observed that municipal buildings tend to be under maintained and must be able to withstand that. Deb also pointed out that cost is not only a one-shot event, it also accumulates over time. That was supported by Becky.

On the architectural aspects, Becky wondered if chimneys needed to be preserved. Stephen answered that they are part of the building character. Later he pointed out that the Raymond School is the second newest building on the common and is part of a natural architectural progression. It was also observed that the chimney is massive and strangely positioned. Pierre remarked that the chimney was competing with the cupola. Becky added that the building would look better without it.

Peter closed the public hearing at 8:26 PM.

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Regular meeting

Attendees were HDC Peter Kraniak (chair), Bob Casinghino, Pierre Humblet (secretary), Roger O'Donnell. All were active voters.

Peter opened the meeting at 8:29 PM

New applications

Stephen Chase submitted an application for a certificate of appropriateness to repaint 19 on the Common in yellow with white trim, like 7 old Winchendon Rd. The building dates from the 1930's. It is currently painted green. At some point in the past it was blue and at another point it had purple trim. The commission requested that more precise references to the proposed colors be provided for the record.

Bob motioned to accept the application for consideration with a public hearing. Roger seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2020-08-1

Stephen Chase submitted an application for a certificate of appropriateness to reroof the building with architectural IKO hunter green shingles, replacing 3-tab slate grey.

Roger motioned to accept the application for consideration with a public hearing. Bob seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2020-08-2

The commission decided to reschedule its August meeting from Aug 20 to Aug 27 to allow enough time to meet the public hearing posting requirements.

Minutes

The members read the minutes of the July meeting, which had been distributed by e-mail. Roger motioned to accept them as read. Peter seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned

Roger motioned to close the meeting. Peter seconded and closed the meeting at 8:50 PM.



Pierre A. Humblet
RHDC Secretary