



# Town of Smithfield

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

### **January 10, 2018 MEETING MINUTES DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Robert Leach, Katie Law, Ben Caisse, Jennifer Blanchette, Travis Worthley and Michael Cavanagh  
**ABSENT:** None  
**OTHERS:** Maxine Cavanagh

The January 10, 2018 meeting of the Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission opened at 6:11 p.m.

#### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND HEALTH NOTIFICATION**

Chairman, Robert Leach gave the Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – December 13, 2017**

The minutes from the December 13, 2017 Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission meeting were reviewed. Katie made a motion, seconded by Ben, to approve the minutes as amended. The corrections are as follows: Under Approval of Meeting Minutes, to add quotations when indicating errors. Under Town Historic Document Archive, to add “of historic inspectors scale cabinet” at the end of the sentence. Under Nominations, Considerations, Designations etc. to “move the information to the next agenda item, HI Designation Added to Town Properties”. Under East Smithfield Neighborhood Center, “to change the word properties to purposes”, “to change Sara to Sarah”, “to change the word should to would”, “to add the word statewide”. Under Cedar Forest Estates Subdivision, Cairns “to change the word developers to archeologists”, to add “or ceremonial”, to change would be considered, to “could be achieved with the owners” and to change the word structures to “areas”. The vote on the motion was unanimous and the motion carried.

Robert advised that it is generally understood that the Smithfield Historic Preservation Policy is to concentrate on one item and table the remaining items.

#### **OLD BUSINESS – Consider and act upon the following matters**

##### **TOWN HISTORIC DOCUMENT ARCHIVE**

This agenda item was tabled.

##### **SMITHFIELD HISTORIC TIMELINE**

Katie is designing a coversheet with the timeline and maps to send to IT Director, Bill Pilkington.

**NOMINATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, DESIGNATIONS, NOTIFICATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE CONCERNING THE SMITHFIELD HISTORIC INVENTORY**

Robert asked Katie to send a link to Sharon for the Smithfield Historic Inventory, which is listed on the Town's Website and the link to the green book. Katie stated that she would forward the information.

**HI Designation Added to Town Properties**

This agenda item was tabled.

**Update H.I. and Publish Digital Searchable Database**

This agenda item was tabled.

**UPDATE ON PROPERTIES**

**East Smithfield Neighborhood Center**

Robert stated that there had been recent developments regarding the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center. He stated that both he and Katie are Members of the Building Committee. He advised that he reviewed the architect report from RGB regarding the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center and that he has numerous issues, which he takes umbrage to and is considering the report only as a Draft. Robert advised that he is very concerned that the demeanor of the meeting changed from historic preservation options to defending the building from destruction. Robert stated that there were inflated costs for work on the building, which give a false impression of how to get the Center opened. It is a disservice. He noted that they changed the name of the RFP request without the knowledge or consent of the Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission. Originally "RFP was the Town seeking proposals to develop assessment of building improvement needs, historic restoration options, probable costs estimates at the aka Esmond Hall..." The assessment building needs historic restoration that title in the introduction has been changed without Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission knowledge or consent. Robert was shocked that the report was sent to the Town Council prior to the Building Committee reviewing it. Robert noted that his name was spelled incorrectly in the report.

Katie stated that she was under the impression that the Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission would receive an initial report to review in order to add additional comments, edits and revisions prior to the finalization of the report. That it would be a structural report, with a list of deficiencies, code violations and repairs in order to prioritize the work needed. Katie advised that she believed that once the work was prioritized, the Town Council would be advised and the work would go out to bid. Katie advised that the demeanor changed because the cost was extensive, but noted that the costs were inflated and there was an overlapping of fees. Robert agreed that the tone of the meeting shifted, questioning if it would be reasonable to restore the building. Robert advised that the report indicated that it's not cost effective to restore it and that there is no historic value to the building.

Ben inquired if another company could review the building and give quote. Robert advised that RGB has a good reputation, but he was appalled at the quality of the report. Robert stated that it was terrible, numerous inaccuracies, numerous grammatical errors and inflated prices. Robert states that he can't give credence based on the estimates and the inaccuracies in the report. Robert advised that RGB misrepresented what he had stated. Robert states that he does not want the building to be demolished and would do as he could do to save it. Robert advised that he rejects the report as not in

the best interest of the Town.

Robert stated that there were inflammatory things said and Robert advised that a few things were germane. Robert advised that he has a professional and personal opinion, but he must be fair. The estimate includes probable costs and all prices include soft costs, overhead profit and design fees. Robert stated that most of work needed to restore the building would be approximately a quarter less than the RGB's proposal. Robert stated that volunteers might also bring costs down.

Robert stated that for the record, the building was donated in 1951, with its origins in 1851 and was relocated in 1906. It survived numerous hurricanes, blizzards and the mill closing down. Robert advised that the building was donated to the Town to be held in trust for recreation purposes for the public. Robert stated that with the receipt of that gift comes responsibility of good stewardship. Robert advised that the Town has an obligation and responsibility to protect the structure.

Robert stated that the Speaker of the House, Joseph DeAngelis dedicated the building to George M. Smith in 1991. Robert advised that for over forty years Mr. Smith was dedicated to enriching the lives of the community through the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center. Robert advised that it is a small part of his legacy and that it should be protected and it should be honored.

Robert inquired if the Commission has confidence in the report. Katie stated that she wasn't sure what direction the report was going. Katie advised that many people would have a problem if the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center were demolished. Robert stated that there were several recent articles mentioning the ESNC such as Mr. Bruno's segment about remembering Esmond Street, Randy Rossi's article about becoming Town Manager and the Observer's year in review listing the top ten things that is in the best interest of the community and number four was the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center.

Katie stated the focus was to get The East Smithfield Neighborhood Center opened by immediately restoring structure damage, prioritizing work and then make the historical restorations. The RP report assessment should include the scope of work and recommendations for improvements.

#### SCOPE OF WORK

"The basic services to be provided will include architectural and engineering service for the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center Renovation and Restoration Project. The consultant shall assemble a team of qualified architectural and building systems design professionals to complete the Project, including those experienced in the preservation of historic faculties."

In light of the unauthorized scope of work, lack of historic preservation we highly recommend review of this report.

*Travis made a motion, seconded by Ben, after due deliberation, a motion of no confidence in the report provided by RGB Architects regarding the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center based on the following:*

- *unauthorized change of the scope and title of the report*
- *possible inflation of costs*
- *lack of attention to Smithfield Preservation Commission goals.*

*We, the Commission, authorize our Chair and Vice Chair investigate further to pursue a remedy. Anything less would be a disservice to the Town of Smithfield. The vote on the motion was unanimous and the motion passed.*

*Katie made a motion, seconded by Mike, that a local Historic District be formed in Esmond, to include solely the site and structure known as The East Smithfield Neighborhood Center and that the Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission be seated as the Historic District Commission. The vote on the motion was unanimous and the motion passed.*

Robert stated that he would ask that the formation of the Historic District Commission be on the next Town Council's Agenda. Robert advised that the goal is that the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center be considered for Grant money for a local historic district. Robert advised that he would approach the owners of the abutting neighbor the 1813 Allenville Stone Store for its inclusion into the proposed Local Historic District. Robert advised that the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center didn't receive National Register based on the condition at this time, but its historic and architectural value to the community and is based on high merit.

- **Stillwater Pedestrian Bridge, Dedication Plaque**

This Agenda item was tabled.

- **Cedar Forest Estates Subdivision, Cairns**

Mike stated that he spoke with Town Planner, Mike Phillips, who advised that he had not heard back from Doug Harris of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Mr. Cavanagh added that the Planning Board withdrew their request and is awaiting additional information.

Robert stated that he received information that the last few Planning Board videotapes were horrible. He advised that the videotapes are a matter of record and that they were ineligible. He stated that he will request that they be reviewed as the video equipment and audio is not effective for the audience or those reviewing the Planning Board videotape.

- **Corrections to PAL Letter**

This agenda item was tabled.

- **Mary Mowry Review of Deed Restrictions**

This agenda item was tabled.

### **HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGNATION/DATE PLAQUES, DONATION, APPLICATION FORMS, RESEARCH**

This agenda item was tabled.

### **HISTORIC STONE WALLS WORKSHOP**

Travis stated that he has been working on stonewalls and intends on doing a workshop in the Spring. Travis distributed several books, magazines and a stonewall manual that contained interesting things about how granite is quarried. A few books presented are as follows:

*Stone Slabs and Iron Men, The Deer Isle Granite Industry; Stonington, Maine*

*Dry Stone Walls by Lawrence Garner*

*In the Company of Stone, The Art of the Stone Wall walls and words by Dan Snow, photographs by Peter Mauss*

*Publication of the Stone Stonexus Magazine The Periodical Foundation Numbers XI, XII, XIII and XV*

Editor/Photo Editor Graphic Design Thomas Lipps printed and published by STONEXUS PRODUCTIONS LLC

**HPC FACEBOOK/WEBPAGE**

This agenda item is tabled.

**HISTORIC STONEWALL REBUILDING DESIGN MANUAL**

This agenda item is tabled.

**EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH TO SMITHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOR FALL 2017**

Ben stated that he is familiarizing himself with RI standards as he teaches in MA. He advised that he is working on a lesson curriculum for Elementary Schools, Old County and LaPerch, that would be useful and practical, but wants it to be quality work. Ben advised that he wants the curriculum to be used and built upon within the schools. He advised that he is developing a traveling, hands on event to correspond with his lesson.

Jenn stated that Smithfield Elementary Schools have held a Museum Night at the school, which was similar to what Ben would like to do. Ben advised that it would be a perfect outreach for the program and will contact the Principals of Old County and LaPerch to inquire about the previous program and how he could develop a current program. Ben added that once the Outreach Program is developed than he will branch out to Textile Revolution and Child labor. Ben stated that he is looking for Industrial Revolution artifacts. Robert stated that he worked in a textile mill and would be able to explain how dangerous it was and he has a lot of tools. Katie offered to provide large bobbins, spindles, Esmond Mill Blanket and the advertisement table for it. Katie suggested that Ben contact Ocean State Antiques in Greenville and Robert added that there are two other Antique shops in Chepachet and Foster. Ben stated that he would like to focus on the program in February.

Robert thanked Ben and stated that it would be good publicity.

**IDENTIFICATION BADGES FOR S.H.P. COMMISSION MEMBERS**

This Agenda item was tabled.

**TOWN HALL WINDOW RESTORATIONS**

Removed from Agenda.

**STATION ONE, RIHP&HC 106 REVIEW**

Removed from Agenda.

**Burlingame Estates Stone Walls Removal/Protections**

Mike proposed that future pre and post developments be video taped and recorded as a matter of record in conjunction with other information that the Planning Department receives. Robert will contact Town Planner, Mike Phillips to advise him of the suggestion.

**Protection for Outbuildings, Necessaries, Privies, etc. Recent wind damage**

Robert stated that there's a property on Limerock that has not been repaired to date. Robert advised that he would send a letter of interest to the owner.

**Stone Wall Tax Reduction Exemptions**

Robert stated that he received two requests for Stonewall Exemptions. Robert advised that one property received a Stonewall Tax Exemption, but stated that there would not be any further work until Spring.

**Emergency Management**

This agenda item was tabled.

**NEW BUSINESS – Consider and act upon the following matters**

Robert stated that he received correspondence from RIDOT regarding 106 locations to be reviewed for proposed Toll Locations. Robert advised that the correspondence stated there would be no adverse impact on historic properties and sites. Robert advised that upon review, if there is a glimmer of impact that he would advise the commission and if necessary would request a special meeting. Robert stated that proposed locations are within a quarter mile radius and the buildings are on side roads. Robert advised that the Commission would need to do site visits on each proposed site to see what the impact would be on the properties. He stated that the Commission legitimately has a roll to advocate on preservation. Robert stated that he needs to respond to them indicating the properties that could be impacted. Robert advised that he would appreciate the Commission's help in finding any adverse impacts on properties. Robert will email the Commission the proposed tolls for their review.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Robert stated that he went to an event at the Newport Art Museum. He advised that the Smithfield Historic Preservation Commission received a State Preservation Grant and a nice Citation Award from Governor, Gina Romondo recognizing Waterman Tavern aka the 1822 Smithfield Exchange Bank restoration project. Robert stated that there are opportunities to receive additional Grant Money.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Ben made a motion, seconded by Mike, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The vote on the motion was unanimous and the motion carried.*

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Gilmore

Recording Secretary