Notice of Meeting of the West Newbury Historic District Commission

Location: Town Hall, 491 Main Street, West Newbury, MA

Tuesday, November 28th, 2023, 6:00 pm

Notes & Minutes

**In attendance:** Jack Alden, Madeleine Cannon, Alison Hardy, Jill Hudson, Angus Jennings, Wendy Reed

**Re: Discussion of potential additional town Historic Districts..**

1. An historic study committee, if needed, would be appointed by the Select Board; much of the groundwork has been done by the Historical Commission
2. The potential districts in question are: Manufacturer’s Row; Maple Street; Way to the River.
3. Per Mr. Jennings, who took the time to review the related [Rules and Regulations for Establishing Historic Districts](https://www.communitypreservation.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4646/f/uploads/establishing_local_historic_districts.pdf) during our call, informed us that the Historic District Commission has a primary hand in moving forward with the formal establishment of creating historic districts through creation of, and approval of, new town bylaws.
4. The group also discussed the crucial element of neighborhood engagement and awareness
5. In discussion with Mr. Jennings and Ms. Reed, the next likely Town Meeting at which these bylaws to establish new districts and their composition within the current HDC will realistically be at next Spring’s Town Meeting (2025).
6. Next steps:
   1. HDC needs to meet with the Planning Board, and specifically the Town Planner, who can help advise and facilitate subsequent public meetings.
   2. Upon more a thorough review of the aforementioned “Establishing a Local Historic District” guidelines and checklist, set up a follow-up meeting with Ms. Elisa Grammer of the Historic Commission to discuss updates and next steps

**Regarding the recruitment of new commission members…**

1. The meeting was joined by Ms. Cannon, a newly established Training Field resident, who is a prospective member
2. Other current outreach options have yet to solidify additional members; Mr. Jennings confirmed that although the commission currently does not have a bylaw-required seat filled the commission can still continue new and current business
3. Ms. Hardy will also reach out via the town’s local Facebook group for potential recruitment

**Regarding the departure of Jill Hudson as Commission Chair; transition and next steps, which included an update to current ongoing HDC initiatives…**

1. Review of Transition Memo:
   1. Initiative to remove overgrown yew shrubs at the Training Field:
   2. Per Mr. Jennings, the town DPW can pull these out without issue, simply need some lead time to get their time reserved due to summer months and staffing.
   3. Mr. Jennings also confirmed that, as long as scope is minimal, the town should be able to absorb any removal costs in their standard operating budget.
2. Update to the anti-scavenging language to create a policy for SElect Board review/approval:
   1. Mr. Jennings and his staff sent along some language to review and use as a starting point; Ms. Hudson will send to Ms. Hardy for eventual next steps.
3. The commission reviewed the transition memo and agreed that the removal of the yew shrubs (and options for replacement grass or plantings) will remain high priority, as well as the advancement of adding new historic districts to the HDC’s charge.
4. Other items can either remain in an ongoing or optional status (member recruitment, upgrades to the Liberty Tree)
5. After some discussion of the commission’s next steps with Ms. Hudson’s declaration to resign her post as HDC Chair, Ms. Hardy graciously agreed to step into the role.
6. Ms. Hudson will submit tonight’s notes/minutes to the town, and alert the Town Clerk to the change in the commission’s composition.