HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 01, 2020, Held online via Zoom
Present: Kari Laprey, Scott Stevens, Bryce Waldrop, Dylan Smith
Absent: Kurt Hultstrum, Amy Phalon
Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm

Introduction: Read aloud by Scott Stevens.
All voting done by roll call.

Citizen’s Forum
N/A

Applications
15 Long Sands Road – York Public Library (Gerry Runte Representing)

Conflicts of Interest: None.

Public Hearing:

Stevens noted the HDC had previously seen this proposal in draft form.
Gerry Runte stated the proposal is the same COA submitted in March and includes (2), non-payment vehicle charging stations. The Library is concerned about current financial position and the Efficiency Maine grant is being temporarily held while funding is sought. However, the proposed scope is now reduced to a single charging station, not two. And even though construction is not set to proceed, the committee hopes to approve this step of the process whether it proceeds at this point or not.

Acceptance: Laprey motioned to accept the application, Waldrop seconded, unanimously approved via roll call vote.

Runte explained the funding includes: $10k grant; $10k Library; $17k Town of York (incl. in-kind matching).

Stevens asked whether we should vote/decide on a reduced scope.

Laprey concerned about deciding on the application without all of the details decided.

Runte stated he would likely withdraw the application and resubmit when funding is secured and they are ready to move forward.

Waldrop stated he would accept the proposal now or support delaying, whichever the group decided.
Stevens concerned about setting a procedural precedent.
Runte stated he would withdraw the proposal and resubmit when the scope is finalized.
Laprey stated the HDC would be happy to schedule a special meeting time to accommodate their project schedule.
Public Hearing closed.

32 Surf Point Road, Surf Point Foundation – Lisa Fichman Representing
Conflicts of Interest: None.
Acceptance: Waldrop motioned to accept the application, Laprey seconded, unanimously approved.
Public Hearing:
Fichman gave a brief overview of the project, which involves the demolition of an existing rental dwelling structure. Fichman explained it would be too costly to bring the structure up to code for the purposes of the Foundation and does not support their long-term goals. An engineering assessment was completed as well as a historical assessment which stated the property is not significant.
Laprey noted the historical significance of the property due to its relation to May Sarton (1912-1995) who once rented the property.
Fichman stated the building was designed as a residence, not an artistic retreat, and renovating to accommodate this purpose would be too costly. Financial stability of the Foundation is an important issue.
Laprey discussed looking at the historical significance by applying the National Register criteria for evaluation, which does allow for historical association within the last 50 years in some cases. May Sarton lived in the property n 1973 and wrote numerous pivotal works here. The site, known as Wild Knoll, is also part of a network of iconic LGBTQ+ sites in the northeast.
Fichman stated that May Sarton is connected to the house only, and referring to her biography, stated that Sarton was a renter and did not like the house. Maintenance and care are beyond the mission/finances of the Foundation. New construction would occur sometime in the far future. She stated Chris Closs was the historic preservation consultant for the assessment.
Waldrop stated that the size of the residence, and the solid construction might suggest it is adaptable to a variety of uses. Would the Foundation be willing to “mothball” the property in-situ and pursue a program at a later date when they have a clearer vision for the property? Fichman stated that studio art spaces require special systems for ventilation and climate control and it would be too cumbersome and expensive to adapt the current property. A renovation was estimated to cost between $1 million and $2 million dollars. The Foundation is concerned the structure is a safety and liability hazard, and architecture and renovation are contrary to their mission.

Laprey asked where new construction would go on the property? Fichman stated there is a conservation easement on the property and this is the best suited building site. The other site is wooded and they do not want to disrupt the natural landscape. Stevens asked if the original benefactor and creator of Surf Point, Mary Lee Smart, had stated her intentions for the site. Fichman stated no, she had not referred to this structure specifically, but she loved the site and wanted artists to be able to create here.

Laprey asked about the inclusion of a museum, or pursuing grants for renovation? Fichman stated this is a private foundation and not intended to be a public museum.

Waldrop reiterated the idea of mothballing the building to allow time to consider options. Demolition is very final, and historical significance is best assessed by later generations, hence the 50-year rule applied to most historical projects. Fichman stated the Foundation and Mary Smart’s focus was on supporting artists.

No additional public comments were made.

Public Hearing Closed.

HDC Deliberation:

Stevens stated this was a tough one. The historical significance is solid, but as a former leader of several non-profit organizations, he was empathetic to their financial concerns. He asked if there was merit in assessing local feeling for the property?

Laprey agreed on the historical significance, suggested a demolition delay to pursue further documentation. Perhaps there might be salvage opportunities.
Waldrop stated he was in agreement with Laprey.
Stevens discussed a 60-day delay to allow time for documentation and outreach.
Public Hearing reopened. Fichman stated they re reopening September 01, 2020 and would like to have demolition work completed by then.
Deborah Taylor asked whether a museum would be considered.
Public Hearing closed.
Decision: Laprey motioned to delay for 60 days, Waldrop seconded, unanimously approved.
HDC would revisit this project at their August meeting to consider status and whether the full delay period was still needed.

17 Sentry Hill – Tim DeCoteau representing
Conflicts of Interest: None.
Acceptance: Laprey motioned to accept the application as submitted, Waldrop seconded, unanimously approved.
Public Hearing:
DeCoteau stated the design was revised because the height of the elevator/stair tower went beyond the allowable limit of 35-feet. They would prefer a pitched roof to match the rest of house, but the height does not allow it, thus a flat, or low-slope, roof is proposed for the tower.
Waldrop asked about seeking a variance.
DeCoteau stated it would not likely be approved.
Waldrop suggested a balustrade could add architectural detail, hiding the flat roof.
DeCoteau stated the roof was not very visible to begin with, and the design options were very limited.
Laprey asked about the specifications with materials noted?
DeCoteau stated they were using the same specifications, and the materials were now noted.
Public Hearing closed.
Decision: Waldrop motioned to approve the application, Laprey seconded, unanimously approved.
Finding of Fact: Waldrop would prepare the FOF and submit to Town Hall by Friday.

NEW BUSINESS
Stevens discussed having a workshop to consider steps moving forward after the district expansion decision. He will send out an email for dates, and follow public notice guidelines. Discussed either an online meeting, or meeting outdoors.

OLD BUSINESS
N/A

REVIEW MINUTES

| March 04, 2020 | Laprey motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Stevens seconded, unanimously approved. |

ADJOURNMENT
Waldrop motioned to adjourn, Laprey seconded, unanimously approved.
Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.