

Historic District Commission

Minutes

The Provincetown Historic District Commission Work Session of Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 11:00AM in the Judge Welsh Room at Town Hall, 260 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657.

Members present: Laurie Delmolino (LD), Chair, Historical Commission Rep.; Chris Mathieson (CM), PAAM Rep.; Michela Murphy, Alternate; Anthony Iannucci (AI), Alternate.

Members absent: John Dowd, Vice Chair, PGB Rep.; Hersh Schwartz, Clerk, Chamber of Commerce Rep.

Staff present: Thaddeus Soulé (TS), Town Planner and Moderator.

1. Discussion of opportunities for grants and education

MM spoke of the process to become a Certified Open Government (COG) which will qualify the Town for a number of grants as well as making available Mass Historic Commission (MHC) and National Alliance of Preservation Commission (NAPC) in-person classes and refresher courses. No fees or downside effects were reported, but that a COG designation may welcome a bit more oversight and need to maintain credibility through criteria, i.e., how the HDC is run, policy in practice, and other board attributes. MM said there may also be conservation grants which can open the Town to more funding. AI asked why it is that the HDC and not Town staff is the entity instituting the certification, to which TS responded by featuring the stated criteria on screen, part of which requires an Historic Preservation component for participation. Benefits parameters are categorized under Funding, Technical on the COG website

MM is currently gathering Board member bios and will provide a cover letter for the application and advised that the Board add a sentence or two of reference to their bios regarding their participation on the HDC. TS offered to include bios from TS and AH. MM said she would like to get all the information collected to present before the Select Board (SB) as soon as possible; noted she has taken 22 courses so far this year, and 20 prior to Covid which are not online, and will forward the course documentation to the Board.

AI offered to edit the work that MM will compile and added that he would prefer to attend classes in person rather to have to spend more time at the computer; asked if the Town might be interested in serving as host for some of these classes and seminars once it becomes a COG. MM said her hope is that the Town gaining COG designation will provide HDC applicants with additional site-specific protocols for acceptable construction when proposing work projects in the Historic District.

MM provided relevant books to the meeting which were lent out to the Board for reference; said the more education gained on behalf of historic presentation the more the HDC has to offer the Town in terms of policy and determination and the ability to employ the best vernacular; spoke of the work and guidance of former HDC Board member, Martin Risteen, is getting this process started. CM said he seeks to look at design designations though the historic lens. AI asked per the Certificate of Appropriateness or when applicants are requesting acceptability based on bylaw and not whether Board members happen to like their design plans.

LD nominated MM for to the position of Grants Coordinator. CM seconded the motion and it passed, 3-0-0; CM, AI, LD.

2. Town Board Nomination Process

TS related that, based on passage at the recent Town Meeting, the 30 day process of vetting nominations for newly opened Board seats from the SB to the Moderator and back to the SB will be eliminated for all Town Boards starting in 2023 and that all vacant Board seats will remain so until the SB makes a designation; neither the HDC nor any other Town Boards will be involved in the selection process for new members to their contingent, although Board endorsements will be recorded as usual and presented before the SB. Nominations for the position to PMPM Representative to the HDC will be submitted to the SB starting on December 30, 2022.

AI asked if someone more qualified than himself might be added to the HDC in his stead, to which LD spoke of AI's qualifications, insights and dedication to Historic Commission policymaking during his tenure on the Board. MM stated her opinion that the current Board composition has a very good dynamic. LD spoke of her own initiation into the Board and the learning curve

3. Current Builds and Renovations Discussion

The Board caught up on several examples of recently completed work about Town and based on those approvals, if any future discussion at meeting might be appropriate. CM spoke of the benefits of having submitted contextual drawings to accompany applications. AI expressed that contractors should not be released from their obligations to purchase and employ acceptable building materials for their clients' home projects due to leniency on the part of the HDC, to which TS concurred, adding that the Board is within its right to continue any decision on all occasions when the consensus is reached that the plans are not fully clear or appropriate to policy.

LD made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:20pm. CM seconded the motion and it passed, 4-0-0; CM, MM, AI, LD.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jody O'Neil