

Historic District/Heritage Commission

Minutes of November 9, 2005

Present: M.Crisler, T.Furlong, C.Pynn

P.Schena arrived at 5pm

1. Review and approval of September minutes and approval of July minute as amended.

T. Furlong made a motion to approve minutes. Motioned seconded by M. Crisler.

2. Status of Town Hall Painting issues.

David Sullivan is trying to find someone else to finish the work. Mr. Doyle will be paid on a prorated basis for the work he finished.

3. Incentives to Maintain Historic Properties in Village District and Town Wide

The Commission is very concerned regarding the loss of privately owned historic properties and recognize the need to work with owners and other town bodies to at least document if not preserve the remaining structures. Many historic buildings are quickly disappearing either through development or are demolished for training. C.Pynn has gathered information regarding **Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation**. This program rewards private investment in the rehabilitation of historic properties for use as offices and retail stores. The program is administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office and the IRS. It allows for a:

- 20% tax credit for the amount of money spent for *certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures* or
- 10% tax credit for the amount of money spent for *certified rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936*. That is *those buildings not in an historic district*.
- This significantly lowers the amount of tax owed on a building
- Applications are made through the State Historic Preservation Office; National Park Service reviews the applications; IRS ensures that properties are eligible.

C.Pynn suggested the possibility of creating a town tax exemption for businesses operating from historic homes to encourage preservation. The legality of this approach would have to be explored for inclusion on the March ballot.

Margaret Crisler read from the Village Center District Master Plan regarding zoning and site plan historic preservation within the district (section 6-12). The Master Plan strongly supports the preservation of historic buildings within the district.

M. Crisler made a motion that the Historic Resource List be used by the Planning Board on all site and subdivision reviews for the preservation of historic and special character places. T.Furlong seconded the motion. Motion made by M.Crisler that the Fire Dept. should also have a copy of the resource list and should refer to it whenever a building is to be used for training purposes/possible destruction. T.Furlong seconded. P.Schena will send a letter along with the list to the Planning Board and Fire Dept. Also discussion regarding updating the resource list.

4. London Bridge Historic Site

Bev Donovan from the School Board came to discuss the London Bridge structure near the proposed road into the new high school. The Commission feels that this is an important historic structure and should be preserved.