

MINUTES

Longmeadow Historical Commission
Special Meeting
Wednesday, September 26, 2018
7:00 pm, in the Adult Center at Greenwood

In Attendance: Maggy Cohn, Barbara Fitzgerald, Beth Hoff, Tim Casey and Steve Weiss

Guests: Heidi Shea, Dave Miller, Mark Wojcik, Susan Valania, Arlene Miller

Called to order at 7:03 p.m.

New Business

Colony Hills Sidewalks and Repaving Project

Arlene Miller initially brought this situation to the Commission's attention because the Colony Hills neighborhood is of historical significance. (See Areas of Historical Significance in Longmeadow, MA Compiled by the Longmeadow Historical Commission Last revised 10/19/2017 available in the Historical Commission area of the Town of Longmeadow website.)

Situation described to the Historical Commission by homeowners in Colony Hills:

Gas pipes were recently replaced in this neighborhood which resulted in the need to repave the roads and repair the sidewalks. As a result, the neighborhood's sidewalks are being repaired and removed by the Palmer Paving Corporation hired by the Department of Public Works. Also some trees will be removed (3 under consideration). Crosswalks and stop signs are being repositioned. Windover, Colony, Greenwich, Rugby, and Eton roads are all impacted by this project. According to town officials, some homeowners' private sidewalks must also be removed. The Code of Massachusetts Title 521, a compilation of Architectural Access Board regulations, was cited by the town officials. The Town Engineer said that whenever a road is repaved, (using chapter 90 funds) if there is damage or injury to a pave cut, it must be replaced. Town officials also reported that tactile strips are required under CMR 521. Homeowners are concerned that the original Frederick Law Olmsted Firm's curved sidewalk design is being replaced with a perpendicular crosswalk design that is damaging the historic character of their neighborhood. Homeowners contacted the Boston Architectural Board for advice on this matter.

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Andy Krar, Town Engineer, Mario Mazza, Director of Public Works and and Craig Markham, Assistant Town Engineer met with members of the Colony Hills Homeowners Association to discuss the sidewalks and repaving projects. As a result of two meetings and a walk through of the project, the town made some modifications to the project. Unfortunately, the work commenced without these modifications being passed on to the company doing the work.

Discussion:

The Historical Commission members concluded that the situation described by the Colony Hills homeowners illustrates a lack of communication between town departments and boards.

The Longmeadow Historical Commission is a municipal agency, operating under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 8d. The purpose of the Longmeadow Historical Commission is to plan and implement programs for the identification, evaluation, preservation and protection of Longmeadow's historic places. The Historical Commission works in an advisory capacity to other town commissions and boards to ensure that historic preservation is considered in planning for future Longmeadow development.

The town should have consulted its own advisory board before undertaking this work. In fact, both the Colony Hills Homeowners Association and the Historical Commission should have been consulted prior to the initiation of this project and were not.

The suggestion was made that a carefully worded letter to the DPW and Town Manager might result in more careful handling of future projects.

Follow-up Action:

Prepare letter to town engineer, select board, town manager and DPW director.

Read letter at a Select board meeting.

Hand out information indicating areas of historic significance at the Select board meeting - again.

Next Meeting - October 18th

Adjourn - 8:04

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