

TOWN OF STOW
GLEASONDALE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the March 3, 2022 Gleasondale Local Historic District Study Committee Meeting

Members present: Margaret Costello, Catherine Hammill, Jen Gero, Eve Fischer

Members absent: Dorothy Spaulding

Margaret Costello called the meeting to order at 2:00PM

*Margaret Costello motioned to approve the minutes of February 3rd, 2022 as written
Eve Fischer seconded*

Roll Call Vote: Eve Fischer **-Yea**; Catherine Hammill **-Yea**; Margaret Costello **-Yea**;
Jen Gero **-Yea**

Preliminary Study Report – Updates

Margaret Costello said she been in contact with Stow resident Laurie Burnett who would be willing to assist the Committee with drafting a preliminary study report to the Mass Historical Commission.

Margaret Costello said Laurie Burnett has experience working on similar reports, and previously was a resident of Gleasondale.

Town Planner Jesse Steadman said he has been in contact with a historic preservation consultant named Wendy Frontiero, who provided him a model proposal for the preliminary study report work. Jesse Steadman said he was introduced to Wendy Frontiero through consultant Peter Flinker, who the town has worked with on Lower Village rezoning and Stow Acres. Jesse Steadman said the Town Administrator said that that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding could be applied towards consulting costs for a preliminary study report. Jesse Steadman said if outside consulting is requested, the committee should draft a simple Request for Proposals (RFP). Jesse Steadman said he provided Wendy Frontiero with information included in historic inventory forms for Gleasondale, as well as work compiled by UMass for a previous mill revitalization study.

Jesse Steadman said that Wendy Frontiero could also assist the committee with the required historic district bylaw. Jesse Steadman said the committee should have a clear picture of the consulting services required so they can get an accurate price quote. Margaret Costello said Wendy Frontiero sounds like a good person for the committee to work with. Jesse Steadman suggested the committee draft an RFP and allow both Wendy Frontiero and Laurie Burnett to submit proposals.

Eve Fischer said the two most important historical assets in Gleasondale are the old church and the mill building, which should be the primary focus of preservation efforts. Eve Fischer asked if any committee members are acquainted with the current owners of these structures. Margaret Costello said she has met the owner of the mill through the Planning Board, and that he is interested in keeping the property available for use by craftsmen and light industrial uses. Margaret Costello said the person who owns the church believes it is a very valuable piece of property, and has refused offers by the current occupant to buy the site. Margaret Costello said a neighbor of hers in Gleasondale is well acquainted with the person

who currently lives in the church, and that she can try to make some connection with the owner through them.

Eve Fischer mentioned that the church was designed by a locally-prominent architect, and it should be strongly featured in any presentation done on the historic district effort.

Eve Fischer said that the primary goals of a local historic district should be preservation of the mill and the old church, and said that there has been less interest from Gleasondale residents in requiring review of architectural features on homes. Margaret Costello said that larger property owners should be engaged directly to understand that the goals of the district are to preserve the key historical structures and not to introduce stringent regulation of architectural features of homes.

Eve Fischer said that some property owners in Gleasondale are already very excited by this project, and that their concerns must be balanced against concerns of owners who want fewer restrictions. Margaret Costello recalled an instance where a neighbor of hers installed a roof over their entryway, and imagined a historic district committee that could have a helpful, advisory role for those kinds of renovations.

April Public Forum Planning

Eve Fischer said the Stow Historical Society has a wealth of knowledge and information about the history of Gleasondale that the committee could use. The Committee discussed other assistance that could be called on for the initial public forum. Eve Fischer said she can reach out to the Stow Historical Society for assistance planning the forum.

Resident Laurel Cohen said before this committee goes before Town Meeting, she would like to see Gleasondale residents consulted directly. Eve Fischer said that this committee has already canvassed the neighborhood twice and will get more input from Gleasondale residents as part of the Public Forum.

Jesse Steadman said populating a presentation will be the main task before this committee. Eve Fischer said the committee also must be very prepared to answer likely questions. Jesse Steadman suggested the forum be limited to an hour, and the biggest task for this committee is to understand what information they want to get from the public. Catherine Hammill said she thinks an important task of the forum should be to allay the common concerns the public might have about the historic district proposal. Jesse Steadman added that the Committee could consider asking residents directly how some of the concerns could be addressed. Jesse Steadman said the committee should be ready to summarize outreach efforts to date.

Eve Fischer wondered if it would be helpful to have a resident of a nearby community who lives within an historic district speak about their experiences. The committee recalled Anne Forbes, an Acton resident who advised them about the process of creating a historic district at the previous meeting.

Workplan Update

Jen Gero said she will work alongside Dot Spaulding to compile some photos and other useful information from the Historical Commission and begin populating a history presentation. Jen Gero said she will also reach out to Maynard writer David Mark for assistance he can provide.

Eve Fischer said she will get in touch with Historic Society to see what information they have available.
Eve Fischer said she will also reach out to the owner of the Gleasondale Mill.

Catherine Hammill said she will look for data regarding home values in historic districts. Jen Gero said that buyer pools are generally reduced in historic districts.

Margaret Costello said she will try to establish contact with the current owner of the church.

Margaret Costello motioned to adjourn

Eve Fischer seconded

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan