

WEST TISBURY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting: Wed March 9, 2022
Meeting at 10:30 AM

Attending: Sean Conley, Anne Fisher, Mark Mazer, Nancy Dole, Josh Gerhard
Absent: Charles Kernick
Also Attending: Jen Rand, Skip Manter, Kathy Logue, James Klingensmith, Bethany Hammond

Joint site visit with Howes House Committee began at 10:30 AM.

HDC was given a tour of the Howes House interior top to bottom by the Howes House Committee, to illustrate how the architectural plans to renovate and expand the interior space necessitated the exterior appearance of the proposed plan the HHC had presented to the HDC via email and then again at joint meeting on February 17, 2022.

Jen explained that the Howes House Committee did the best they could with the existing structure. She said that their initial preference was to demolish the entire building and build from scratch. There were no alternative plans to show us, re that, because when hiring the architect they made the assumption that the HDC would never allow a building in the historic district to be demolished.

The HDC suggested the existing building could be improved, both inside and out, by removing additions made previously that were not in keeping with the character of the original structure.

Josh explained how an addition (replacing the existing 1990s addition, which would be demolished) that was sensitive to the original building and the historic district surrounding it, could better reflect both the values of the community and the historic nature of the original structure. An appropriately designed addition to the original structure would make it possible to provide for the expansion of space needed, which the plan submitted by the Howes House Committee is intended to address.

We discussed the possibility of demolishing the original structure and replacing it.

Mark asked if any other historic districts in MA had allowed demolition, and Nancy will write to the other districts in MA and ask for examples, if there are any. Generally, demolition of historic structures is not approved by HDCs, unless the structure is beyond repair and the replacement matches the dimensions and exterior architectural features of the original building. Plans must be approved by the HDC before a demolition is approved.

Sean, speaking as Chair, told the HHC that the plans as presented would not be approved by the HDC.

Jen was concerned about missing the opportunity to bring the plans to Town Meeting, Skipper said he thought funds could be made available to ask the architect to

provide preliminary sketches of new plans that would address the HDC issues. Kathy agreed.

We discussed the need to move forward together, both the HHC and the HDC, and work cooperatively to seek a solution that honored the bylaw and the character of the historic district and addressed the needs of the larger community.

The HDC will meet on Monday, March 14th at 6 pm to discuss their concerns, and discuss a possible path forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Dole, Secretary
Approved on March 21, 2022