

BILLERICA HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
February 7, 2024

A meeting of the Billerica Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday February 7, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Room 210 in the Town Hall, also via Zoom hosted by Katherine Malgieri.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; Travis Brown, Vice Chairman; Richard Hawes, Member; Michael Rea, Member; George Simolaris, Member; Kathy Meagher, Alt Member; Tina Pesiridis, Alt Member; Dan Valentine, Alt Member
Katherine Malgieri, Planning Board; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk

Absent: Mary McBride, Secretary; John McKenna, Member; Matthew Ahern, Alt Member; and Mary Jones, Alt Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dave Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Richard Hawes
George Simolaris
Kathy Meagher
Travis Brown
Tina Pesiridis
Michael Rea
Dan Valentine
David Gagliardi

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

Andrew Jennings of 29 Talbot Road Billerica – Speaking regarding LRTA Bus Shelters. Mr. Jennings has served as Billerica's representative on the Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board. He made a presentation before this commission in March of 2022 on Bus Shelters because of the possibility of adding shelters as part of the Boston Road North Project. He reported back to the LRTA administrator the negative vibes I received from the commission to glass and steel bus shelters in a historic district. The LRTA decided not to pursue bus shelters in the Boston Road North Project at that time. If the center project is approved, he expects to be back before this commission to discuss bus shelter design issues.

APPLICATIONS:

441 Boston Road – Signage – App #2024-01 (m) – Richard Biggins Representing
Mr. Biggins explained about the older style of the current signage. What the new style sign would have for lighting. Newer sign, same dimensions, cleaner lines, and the Circle K will be smaller.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. The committee asked about LED lighting brightness in comparison to what is there now.

Some think the fluorescent lighting would be softer than LED. Will the circle K and blue framing be back lit? Yes, it will be. Do the number and letters cast any light? They do not.

Travis Brown, seconded by Richard Hawes, move to approve Application # 2024-01 to replace manual pricing board with electronic pricing board, as proposed.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 8-0:

Richard Hawes Aye
George Simolaris – Aye
Kathy Meagher – Aye
Travis Brown – Aye
Tina Pesiridis – Aye
Mike Rea – Aye
Dan Valentine – Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

18 Andover Road – New Accessory Steeple – Informal

The Commission was presented with a copy of the presentation prior to the meeting. Jim O'Connor, 11 Connolly Road Billerica, Chairman of the Building Committee for the First Congregational Church of Billerica, also the Treasurer. Mr. O'Connor would like to discuss a proposal to add a secondary steeple to an existing religious structure. He presented the commission with all the updates they have completed and what is currently being worked on and up coming projects. Then went over the new steeple, where it would be placed and what it they would want it to look like. The purpose of the steeple is to top off the area where the new elevator will be.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. The commission likes the fact they will be able to see the original granite on the side of the building. Maybe while doing all this construction, they could take the vinyl off the building and replace with what was originally there, wood clapboards. Will you be replacing the green space that you are removing? They will look at that in the future. Looks like the new spire is slightly larger than the original. Maybe it should be a bit smaller as to not take away from the original. The commission made a few suggestions regarding the secondary steeple and maybe they could change it to match the existing roof lines behind it or do some other type of roof design.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Presentation for Town Common Gazebo: Mark LaLumiere, Building Commissioner

Mark presented the commission with a copy of his presentation prior to the meeting. Currently the platform is 67 inches above grade. He shows a couple of designs showing rough images of what they could do to add a ramp to make it ADA compliant. There were 3 designs with a ramp wrapping around the gazebo trying to keep the historic aspect of the gazebo. He went over each design.
Design 1 – 67 ft wrap around ramp that tries to keep the historic integrity.

Design 2 – 37 ft grade about 37ft of ramp required, a little better design.

Design 3 – Essentially the same as #2 with a wall of landscaping enclosing the underneath and hiding the ramp behind a false wall of sorts.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. The majority of the commission would like to maintain the historic features of the gazebo but do not want to see it as only an ornamental building. A wheelchair lift was discussed. Maybe lowering it to make less of a ramp or lower it fully to the ground for no ramp. Mark explained the building codes and ADA compliance side. They did ask Mark to come back with other designs.

Presentation for MBTA Communities Zoning: Erika Oliver Jerram, Director of Planning and Community Development

Erika made her presentation to the commission starting with "What is the law/why did the state pass it". The law is M.G.L. 40A Section 3A. (a)(1) and state "An MBTA community shall have a zoning ordinance of by-law that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right." Every town needs to be in compliance by December 31, 2024.

The reasoning for this is due to the housing crisis. Erika went over zoning, TOD Zoning (Transit Orient Development), Billerica's requirements, Compliance/Consequences for noncompliance, Purpose for the New Zoning, Process, Outreach Efforts, and Proposed Zoning Bylaw, Neighborhood Subdistricts, Mills Subdistrict, Treble Cove Subdistrict, Permitting Process, and MBTA Communities and Historic Preservation.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Will there be a certain number of units for affordable housing? Yes, 10%. What about the demo delay law, it should be discussed and strengthened. This does not apply to the historic district. How often will these have to be updated to keep at the 15%. It is Erika's understanding that this is a onetime thing and not changing any time soon.

Miscellaneous Correspondence (Not Open for Discussion):

Travis Brown – update on CPC – Currently two projects being worked on, the Canal Museum and the Clara Sexton House aka Rev Cummings House.

Signs on the center – Mark has started looking at them. There is a question of Neon vs LED, and he needs more clarification. He will be giving the commission an update at some point. They are thinking the Neon is prohibited but LED is not.

Minutes: Approval of November 1, 2023, and December 12, 2023, minutes

November 1, 2023

George Simolaris, seconded by Richard Hawes made a motion to approve the November 1, 2023, minutes.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 7-0-1:

Kathy Meagher – Abstain
Richard Hawes Aye
Travis Brown – Aye
George Simolaris – Aye
Dan Valentine – Aye
Mike Rea – Aye
Tina Pesiridis – Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

Travis Brown, seconded by George Simolaris made a motion to approve the December 12, 2023, minutes.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 6-0-2:

Kathy Meagher – Abstain
Richard Hawes Aye
Travis Brown – Aye
George Simolaris – Aye
Dan Valentine – Abstain
Mike Rea – Aye
Tina Pesiridis – Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

ADJOURNMENT:

George Simolaris, seconded by Travis Brown, made a motion to adjourn.

It was voted:

8 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 8:42 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk