

Historical Commission Minutes March 2024

The Lunenburg Historical Commission met on March 7th at the Ritter building at 7:00 PM.

The minutes for the January meeting were reviewed and accepted.

New correspondence from the Cemetery Commission was received, asking to meet with Chairman McGrath and discuss the status of both cemeteries, as well as the funding for the wall at the South Cemetery.

Public Comment from resident Dave Passios included a short walkthrough video of the Marshall park cave. The walls appear to be intact, with just accumulation of soil and silt.

Resident Bill Tyler stated that he feels strongly about preserving the cave, and additionally was appalled that 763 Mass Ave would ever be considered for demolition.

The status of 763 Mass Ave is still being determined, but being that it is over 75 years old, it will, at a minimum, need to be considered for a demo delay.

Resident and realtor for 763 Mass Ave, David King, presented to the commission an informational packet and brief overview of the state of the building.

The original building was built in 1895, but in 1970, it was converted to a funeral home, and that is where, he believes, the building was stripped of most of its historical features. It was then renovated again in 1983, at which point most of the building's original character was long gone. Only one fireplace original to the 1895 structure remains, and all the crown molding is gone.

The house was originally listed for \$899,000 and by January 26th, the price had been reduced to \$649,000, still with very few interested parties.

A recent water leak also resulted in the interior needing to be gutted down to the wall studs, with an estimated \$30,000 worth of repairs needed. The third floor is also out of code and would require significant work to bring it back to code. It is estimated the house would need around \$250,000 to address these issues.

The commission was invited to do a walkthrough of the structure the following Sunday.

Returning to the Marshall Park cave, the commission's plan is to write a letter to the Town manager informing them on the status of the cave, and to advise that it should be deemed as a historic site.

Additional research on the CPA used in surrounding towns has shown funds being used for significant projects. For example, Boxborough used \$95,000 for the restoration of a cemetery, and Westford used funds to restore an antique snow roller.

We hope to talk to other commissions and inform them of the benefits of this act, and then present it to the select board.

A proposed amendment to the commission's bylaws (ch 134-2) included revising the definition of demolition to include the destruction of both exterior and interior features.

The commission all agreed to present this amendment to the Select board.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.