

Braintree Historical Commission
Minutes
Monday, May 4, 2015
Cahill Auditorium – Braintree Town Hall

Present: Elizabeth Mees (Chair) Al Varraso Kate Nedelman-Herbst
Ron Frazier Paul Carr

Also Present: Christine Stickney, Director of Planning and Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:05 PM

Old Thayer Library/Town Hall (Accessible Plaza Concept) – Members reviewed the conceptual drawings connecting the Town Hall and Old Thayer Library together with the inclined walkways to the center area with a pergola and the two parking areas separated by the berm. Elizabeth Mees commented on the connection of the buildings and low maintenance features with the incline walkways. The Interior Guidelines promote the idea of smallest and minimalist connection to preserve the buildings character. Ron Frazier commented this is the historic district and nothing should change – he personally doesn't care for the pergola. Al Varraso asked if the overall site loses parking with this design and Christine responded that a few may be lost but the existing lot is not configured efficiently so we are able to maintain close to what is out there today. Elizabeth Mees commented on the overall view of the area if you were to come the hill be at the lights on Union/Washington.

Paul Carr noted that a place like Gardner Museum has successfully integrated modern additions into the original architecture. The addition proposed to the Old Thayer Library is just a square brick addition. Members discussed the past proposal of the ramp, revisited the MAAB decision to have the front door be ornamental but useable in an emergency. Ron Frazier expressed his opinion that two entrances are needed for public safety. Christine noted that the variance from the MAAB addresses this with a landing. Kate Nedelman Herbst commented that the berm provides for a social space that could be used for community events – Paul Carr commented the existing mall is there and this is too modern looking for the area. Elizabeth Mees suggested members think of it like the Christopher Columbus walkway in Boston but it has the berm with inclined walkways. A member suggested the Fire Department should be consulted first as to accessibility in an

Ron Frazier commented on the Glover Science building and how good it looks and how influential the commission was with the performing art center when they had to come before the Town because of the historic district.

Members agreed a letter should be sent to the Fire Department regarding the access and have the engineering department perform a survey to verify it can be done as conceptually proposed.

Administrative

Ron and Elizabeth provided changes to minutes. Al Varraso **MOTION** to accept the amended minutes of 3/2/15, seconded by Paul Carr – Voted 4:0:1 (KNH abstain)

Al Varraso **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kate Nedelman Herbst – Unanimously voted
Respectfully submitted,
Christine Stickney, Director
Planning and Community Development