

**Orleans Historic District Study Committee  
Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at 3:00 pm  
Minutes**

Inaugural Meeting of the Orleans Historic District Study Committee was called to order at 3:00 pm.

Attendees: Members Ron Peterson, Joan Nix, Charles Ellis, Edmund Marcarelli, Bill Wibel, Francis Mustaro and David Herrick. Mefford Runyon, Select Board liaison. Eric Dray, consultant, participated via Zoom.

Nominated for Study Committee Chair – Joan Nix. Proposed by Charles Ellis (CE) Seconded by Edmund Mustaro (EM) and passed 6-0-1

Nominated for Study Committee Vice Chair – Ron Peterson. Proposed by CE, seconded by EM, and passed 6-0-1

Nominated for Study Committee Secretary – Fran Mustaro. Proposed by CE, seconded by EM, and passed 6-0-1

Joan Nix (JN) suggested that we begin our public initiative with a press release as soon as possible.

Eric Dray (ED) noted that we are somewhat behind schedule at this point, and we should release questionnaire as soon as possible.

Bill Wibel (BW) mentioned that the ongoing Orleans sewer project is slated to commence work on E. Main street and move through the proposed Historic District. ED commented that this may be a significant impediment to the Historic District effort.

The Committee discussed possible significant disruptive influence caused to the launch of the Historic District initiative due to – 1) Public grappling with not fully understood sewer connection costs and 2) overall distraction caused by the general disruption to the neighborhood life.

JN offered that it might make sense to push back our town meeting goal date possibly to Fall 2024 to let the sewer project proceed.

Ron Peterson (RP) noted that, this being the second attempt at the initiative, we may risk failure if we delay further.

CE commented that we should move ahead with the press release and questionnaire.

In answer to a question, liaison Mefford Runyon (MR) noted that there had been little negative feedback about the project thus far either in general nor related specifically to the associated fees and costs. He noted that there are a number of available funding resources, some income based, that can offer long term, attractively priced loans.

The Committee discussed the potentially positive influence on the acceptance of the Historic District upon completion of the sewer project and elimination of septic consideration in the building codes. This expected to make it easier to expand building footprints or even add to structures in a given neighborhood – outcomes that would likely continue to be regulated within the proposed district.

BW recommended that we establish a Select Board liaison to keep us informed about the project, and MF mentioned that Alan McClennen is in charge of the sewer project.

JN emphasized the need to plan for specific public outreach, and she asked how our mailing costs will be covered, as the Study Committee does not have a budget.

MR commented that funds from the Historic Commission budget can be appropriated for that need. RP offered that this topic will be addressed at the next Historical Commission Meeting on August 9.

MR also commented that the Planning Board should be kept informed of the Historic District progress, and a detailed mention of the Historic District plans and initiative should be included in the report they are compiling.

RP noted that the August 9 Historical Commission meeting will be abbreviated so as to allow a meeting of the Historic District Study Committee to further discuss these topics and an action list that should include –Draft press release, ED review of same, plans to place the press release on the website and creation of a list of groups to inform and engage regarding the Historic District.

ED noted that he can offer examples of FAQ's that will be appropriate for the Committee to publish.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fran Mustaro