

Fair Haven Planning Commission

Town of Fair Haven - August 20, 2025 - Special and Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Robert Richards - Chair, Deborah Laiacona - Vicechair, Ann Finley, Sam Lucci

Commissioners Absent: Linda Sienkiewicz - clerk

Others Present: Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator (*only for regular meeting*), Jennifer Jackson - Minute-taker, Logan Solomon - RRPC, Joe Gunter FH Town Manager (*only for special meeting*), Victoria Angis - President of the FH Historical Society (*only for special meeting*), Walter Speer - Vice-president of the FH Historical Society (*only for special meeting*), Ceil Hunt - member of the FH Historical Society (*only for special meeting*)

Agenda

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Chair Richards. He thanked the members of the Historical society for joining in the walk around the park.

2. New Business:

a. A Commission walk-through the downtown area of Fair Haven to view historical significant properties and architectural features.

Mr. Solomon asked each person to look at the defining features of the exteriors of buildings for guidance in creation of the Historical District Zoning Bylaws.

Mr. Richards assumed the PC would want to leave the park as is. Mrs. Laiacona asked about when the fountain was put in. She stated she believed the trees in the Park should be minimally removed. She mentioned the marble posts around the park in the fencing. She also asked why the benches face out of the park rather than into it? Mrs. Angis asked about the walk-ways and potential for ADA paving of them.

Mr. Speer talked about the difference between a "Green" and a "Park". It was stated that Fair Haven's Green is called "The Park".

Mr. Solomon moved the group on to the residential block of the downtown district. He asked the group to focus on architectural details of buildings and determine what is significant to the town and it's history. Would the town allow citizens to cover up significant historical structures rather than remove them? He asked what are the character defining details of the town. Mr. Richards stated they should consider the financial constraints the bylaws might place on citizens. It was noted that the Downtown designation would allow for more funding to be available to maintain buildings. Mr. Speer noted that there are opportunities for homeowners to apply for home improvement grants. The PC wanted to make sure people knew of the opportunities.

Mrs. Angis asked about missing buildings or reconstruction of buildings and how the town could or should handle those applications. Mr. Solomon stated the PC should use language similar to what has been written already, but include more specifics to state the new structure should be similar to adjacent building styles. He stated that the PC needs to call out what is significant to the town to be saved for downtown style. He quoted the 1980 application

that stated Fair Haven has many architectural styles and the diversity is important to the town's history. Mr. Speer agreed that the diversity of styles is invaluable to the town. Mr. Lucci stated maybe the bylaws should say something to the extent of "We encourage the use of marble, slate and brick in construction". Through discussion it was determined that architectural shape is important more so than embellishments. "We encourage maintenance of historical architecture style."

A question was brought up about demolition vs. rehabilitation. Mr. Solomon stated wording should be added that says something to the effect that "the applicant must state it is economically unfeasible to rehabilitate their structure therefore they are choosing to demolish and rebuild."

The group moved on to the Commercial Block and looked at the same factors as the residential block. It was determined that replacements should be compatible with the block they are included in. Same "block" storefronts should be consistent in color and design. Marble and Slate facades and lintels should be retained as often as feasible. Mr. Solomon asked about vertical additions. The PC stated they should follow Zoning bylaws.

There was discussion of boarding windows and whether it should be allowed or only temporarily allowed. Or if painting the boards to match the building color was important. Mr. Solomon reminded the group that the State will review the document to make sure all decisions are within the law.

Mrs. Laiacona wanted to make sure people knew there was funding available and to grandfather in odd circumstances.

At 8:17 pm Mr. Richards called the group to head back to the town office to finish the PC meeting. The historical society members and the town manager left the meeting.

At 8:30 PM Mr. Richards called the regular meeting to order.

3. Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting - August 6, 2025

Mr. Lucci motioned at 8:31 pm to accept the minutes of August 6th as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Laiacona. All were in favor and the motion passed.

4. Other Business:

a. Discuss progress with components required for achieving the Downtown Designation.

Mr. Solomon stated he will share examples of wording with the PC and will clearly state from which town the wording is from. He will work on drawing in overly broad sections and will check in with the PC over the next week. He mentioned that the *Fair Haven Memories Book Part II* written by the Fair Haven Historical Society is a great reference.

Mrs. Laiacona stated the 5 year plan seems to be another large component still to complete.

b. Review of Mail: None

c. Public Comment: None

5. Adjournment:

Mrs. Finley **motioned to adjourn at 8:41 pm.** Mr. Lucci seconded the adjournment motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker

The Next Commission Meeting will be held on September 3, 2025 at 7:30pm