

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2020 NOV 16 AM 11:36

December 3, 2019

Kelly Room

75 Middle Street, Weymouth, MA

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Jim Clarke, Chairman

Mark Schneider

Cathy Torrey

Jenn Weiss-Donovan (via telephone)

NOT PRESENT:

Mike Murphy

Chairman Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

MINUTES

Chairman Clarke tabled the minutes of October 15, 2019 as they were not ready.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman Clarke stated the Memorial Committee met and approved the request for Elmer Donnelly for Mike Murphy. Additionally, there was a request approved to name the corner of Torrey Street and Park Avenue to be named for David Hawkes, U.S. Navy Reserve.

PRATT HOUSE UPDATE

Chairman Clarke reported no action, no demo yet.

NEW LIBRARY PRE-OPENING EVENTS, UPDATE

Draft 11/21/19

Branch Library Events

For Reopening of Main Library

May 2020

1. PURPOSE. The purpose would be to generate buzz and excitement in anticipation of the reopening of the new main library. There would be three separate events, one for each branch library. Each event would consist of two activities; a talk and walk around the library, discussing its history and relationship to the neighborhood and lighting of the

library exterior that would continue for several days. The talk would be on the first day just before dusk and would conclude with the lighting of the building. On subsequent days the lighting would be on in the early evening hours.

2. NAME OF EVENT. "Lighting Up Libraries", Spotlight on the Branches", etc.
3. TIMEFRAME. One event in each subsequent week prior to the main library opening.
4. DURATION. Three evenings or more?
5. TALKING POINTS. They should include the building construction date, architect and builder, building style, library interior layout and usage, and discussion of its place in the neighborhood (how does it fit into and enhance the area). Each building will have unique aspects to be discussed – genesis of the branch library, special funding bequests, exterior points of interest.
6. LIGHTING. This is where we can have some fun. There could be a standard lighting package for each building, or we could custom design lighting for each branch. There could be stationary lights, moving lights, flashing lights, multicolored lights, etc. We could bring in other design professionals or design students to assist us or we might even create a contest for design submissions.
7. PRESENTATION MATERIAL. Will we have any handouts for attendees? How do we film the event?
8. EXPENSES/FUNDING. What might the budget be for this and how do we generate funds for it?
9. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE. What is the timeline for critical decisions?
10. OUTREACH/APPROVALS. Who might we need approvals from and how do we inform the neighborhood where the event will occur?
11. VOLUNTEERS. How many more people do we need to make this a success?

Chairman Clarke stated the group met and discussed the above topics. They will continue to investigate and report back to this commission as plans develop.

WEYMOUTH 400 REPORT

Currently there is nobody from this commission on the Weymouth 400 Committee, so no report.

**WEYMOUTH DOCUMENT PRESERVATION and TOWN CLERK PRELIMINARY
REVIEW REPORT (two handouts)**

WEYMOUTH DOCUMENT PRESERVATION
INITIAL SURVEY REPORT
TOWN CLERK'S BASEMENT VAULT
DECEMBER 2, 2019

BACKGROUND

During the September and October meetings of the WHC there was a discussion regarding preservation of town documents and how the library has been digitizing many older records in their collection. These documents include Annual Town Records and the Weymouth Gazette/News. It was suggested that we look into the status of records preservation in the Town Clerk's Office, where many historical documents are located. Jim Clarke said that he would speak to the Town Clerk, Kathy Deree, and report back to the commission.

There was a report funded in 2005 and published in 2006 that reviewed the status of historical records in many town departments and several local churches. That report provided a matrix of documents and a set of recommendations for future action. Without a full review at this time, it appears that the library has been most active in implementing recommendations from the report. The report states that there was a federally funded CETA project in the 1970's that created an inventory of documents in the Town Clerk's Office. The report has not been reviewed at this time.

OBJECTIVES –

1. Protect original documents by making sure that they are properly catalogued and stored.
2. Develop a priority list to digitize documents and funds are available.
3. Allow more public access by putting digitized documents online.

INITIAL STEPS –

Since Mark Schneider had used the vault for research on his book, I invited him to meet with Kathy and me. We met on November 20, 2019 and discussed the objectives of the WHC. Kathy was very amenable to working with the WHC. She gave us a tour of the lower vault and discussed her office's recent efforts to try to organize some of the material. Mark and I did a

cursory review of the type of documents and where they were stored. The "Quick Look" inventory is attached.

OBSERVATION AND NEXT STEPS –

1. There is a rich trove of historical material in the vault. The Town Clerk has these documents in a secure and fire-proof location.
2. Certain documents such as Annual Reports and town meeting records are organized and well maintained. Most documents can be quickly located.
3. An inventory of records and location index would be very helpful.
4. Some material might not be required for preservation by the Town Clerk or are duplicates. It is possible that these could be reviewed and might be moved to free up storage space.
5. If the Town Clerk would like the assistance of the WHC, we could help to develop a plan to prioritize documents for preservation by proper storage and digitization.
6. The WHC could work with the Town Clerk to explore possible funding to accomplish some of this work.

SURVEY OF TOWN HALL VAULT FOR WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1. East Wall: Tx Collector's cash books – 1950s, 1960s, ledgers; Real Estate and Sewer ledgers; Board of Zoning appeals; real estate valuations
2. South Wall east – town annual reports; poll tax 1900s by year; registrar's list
3. South Wall west – Boxes, numbered, including official ballots, Verbatim records of Town Meetings
4. West Wall south- real estate valuations 20th Century
5. Center Wall – Business certificates 1991 onward; index to marriages, deaths 1850 onward
6. Center Wall area 2 (north) – Miscellaneous Town records – minutes of selectmen's committees; DPW, Transition by-laws, Board of Health Records

7. West Wall area 2 (metal shelving) – Births, deaths, marriages, beginning 1860s; Planning Board minutes; Maps, Housing Authority; Primary election results; election ballots (recent) 30 boxes 21st Century Town records
8. North Wall – Militia lists from 1800s; GAR letter books and records; Veterans' War memorial records; Muster Rolls Co. H; Specifications for E Weymouth school, 1965; Treasury Warrants; early 20th Century
9. Center Wall North Side – Indexes of mortgage records; Town meeting 1933-34; unmarked envelope with old pictures; 19th C voter registration; in south facing area – poor farm records; early 20th C polling locations; east facing area – General Court records, 19th C. cash books, maps
10. East Wall, north side – Selectmen's records, 19th and 20th C; Fire Department records; unknown bound records in file folders; mid 20th C Selectmen's Correspondence

The above memos were prepared after a brief survey of the vault by Jim, Mark, and Kathy Deree. Chairman Clarke stated he is going to look into finding the inventory that was done by Frank Fryer. He would like to put together a proposal for funding for preservation based on state and federal regulations. Until that time, we will have to make do with the listing that he and Mark and Kathy made.

REGISTER OF DEEDS – VETERANS RECOGNITION REQUEST **BILL O'DONNELL, Norfolk Register of Deeds**

Chairman Clarke stated the registry of deeds plans to publish a booklet recognizing a veteran from each community in the county. He sent a letter to the Commission requesting suggestions.

Chairman Clarke suggested General Bates as one possibility. Chairman Clarke will speak with George Pontes, Veterans Agent, and put on the next agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

HISTORICAL SIGNS

Mark Schneider stated he spoke with Andrew Hultin regarding placing three or four signs at the Wessagusset historical site (origins of the park). Eric Schneider is meeting with the mayor on Tuesday regarding this subject as well.

MIKE MURPHY'S BOOK

Mark Schneider stated he attended a talk by Mr. Murphy regarding his new book.

NEW MEMBERS

Chairman Clarke stated the mayor has not nominated anyone new to the committee, but he will speak with him about new members. Also, he spoke with Jeanne Savoy and she is hopeful that WHC will have a new member by February.

TOWN CLERK FROM WEYMOUTH, ENGLAND

Chairman Clarke stated Kathy Deree received a notice from the Town Clerk of Weymouth, England that she would soon be visiting our town and would love a tour of the town on December 10th. Ms. Torrey stated she will have someone open Abigail Adams House and First Church. Members stated they feel the tour should also include Great Hill, Emery Estate, and Fogg Library.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Weymouth Historical Committee will be held on January 21, 2020.

ADJOURN

Ms. Torrey made a MOTION to ADJOURN at 7:40PM. Mr. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approve:


James Clarke, Chairman

Dated:

11/13/20