

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
March 12th 2013 Meeting
Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT: Chairman Ed Walker, Mary Dorey, Rodney Lundin, Don Mathewson and Jody Purdy-Quinlan

ABSENT: Cathy Torrey, Nancy Cameron

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning and Community Development
John Deady/Developer, Clapp Memorial Building
Barbara Donahue, Archeologist

I. Call to Order 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Walker called the March 12th, 2013 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

The Chairman announced that the newly appointed member was expected to be at the April meeting (presently in Florida).

II. Minutes

Mr. Lundin moved to approve the minutes of the January 14th, 2013 and the February 12, 2013 meetings.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

REPORTS -

Town Liaison

Ms. Lehrer stated that there was nothing new to report this meeting, but she would have some comments later in the meeting when they discussed the when Chester Kevitt Award/New Business.

Old Business

House Signs

Ms. Lehrer announced that the orders for house signs have been placed, referring to the seven (7) of the approved applications. She said once the order is complete (by Mike at Yankee Woodcarvers), she will contact Mayor Kay for a date and arrange for the presentations. She noted that the last time they held this ceremony was June 11, 2012 at which time (13) historic house signs were presented to the homeowners. At this point Ms. Lehrer commented there might be one more approved house sign on the list (awaiting payment).

(Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived)

At this point Mr. John Deady, Developer of the Clapp Memorial condos and town houses came before the Commission. It was noted that this building built in 1903 is important to the Town both historically and architecturally. He told the members that he planned to have the proposed storyboard located inside a circle in the front of the building. He stated that he has met with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan and Chairman Walker to discuss his plans and appreciated their input. He plans to include old pictures of Clapp Memorial on the storyboard - some of which he noted included the troops from WWII. He said that the Chairman gave has already given him some postcards from years ago. Additionally he has met with the Weymouth Historical Society, who will also be donating some historical pictures.

Next Mr. Deady referred to an article he has drafted on the history of the building, which he planned to read adding that he wanted the members input/comments. He planned to include the wording in this article on the storyboard. Further he informed members that plans are to begin work early/mid April - but didn't expect to see any results until the end of June. He referred to the storyboard at the Hingham Shipyard where the history of the shipyard/site has been written up and included pictures of the shipyard in the past. He liked the way theirs was done and would like to do something similar including reference to Central Square.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan supported his plans and asked Ms. Lehrer if she could locate the nomination paperwork on Central Square that was sent to the Ma. Historical Commission - she agreed to look into their whereabouts.

At this point Mr. Deady read the following article into the record, which he drafted re. the history of the (Davis Bates) Clapp Memorial Building (it was noted that some of the info/dates still need to be finalized).

In the late 1800's and early 1900's shoe manufacturing in Weymouth employed as many as ??? people. The town was home to ??? shoe factories including the Stetson Shoe Company, which was located at the intersection of Middle and Main Street and still stands today. The Edwin Clapp Shoe Company had multiple buildings on Charles Street, they sold shoes worldwide.

In 1903 Davis Bates Clapp, the son of Edwin Clapp the owner of Edwin Clapp Shoes, passed away at the young age of ??? Prior to his death Davis had just become a partner in this father's shoe company. Long before there were private gyms, youth leagues and town fields; Edwin Clapp erected the Davis Bates Clapp Memorial Building and fields to honor his son's memory. The building had a gym, bowling alley, boxing ring, an auditorium, a library and a gathering room. The site had baseball and football fields, tennis and basketball courts and later a pool. For a very small fee youths of Weymouth and the surrounding communities could be members. At one time you could sell cookies to pay for your membership to help those that could not afford membership.

The building has been home to and hosted many important groups and visitors over the years. The Rotary Club met here from 19?? to 19?? Supreme Court Justice William Howard Taft visited the site and spoke to the troops from the rear balcony.

Sadly over time the Association that maintained and operated the building could no longer afford the cost of operating the facility. The rear lot was divided and sold. The Pope Housing building was then built where the football and baseball fields once were. In ??? the building was sold and several churches operated at the site until 2008. From 2013 to 2014 the building was renovated and is now condominiums.

During the redevelopment of the property a community room was built and is available to approved groups within the town.

Chairman Walker noted that the Clapp Memorial was used for recreation (Weymouth YMCA) in the past as which then merged with the Quincy YMCA in the 80's.

Mr. Deady told members that when he was younger he played hockey and football there. He asked the members if they could help by supplying some (historical) pictures/information for the storyboard.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the Jefferson School/Central Square Historical District, telling Mr. Deady she has pictures of the interior of the buildings located around Central Square.

Mr. Deady said his target date for completion of the storyboard is mid-May, adding that he would really like to have a picture(s) of the building when it was originally built.

Chairman Walker asked if planned to place the pictures alongside the wording on the board and he said they would.

Ms. Dorey voiced her approval of Mr. Deady's storyboard proposal, adding that she thought it was a great idea to do something similar to what is now at Hingham Shipyard - she commented that she found theirs very informative and attractive.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that she and the Chairman will take the pictures and scan them for Mr. Deady.

Ms. Dorey didn't think the Weymouth Historical Society would let them go. She suggested to Mr. Deady think about superimposing the wording over the pictures.

Mr. Deady was proposing the size of the storyboard to be 24" x 36".

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would like to see it recorded in the minutes that the Commission is pleased and happy with John Deady's purchase of the Clapp Memorial building, adding that the manner in which Mr. Deady has handled the development of the building gives the Commission feeling that they purchased it themselves.

390th Anniversary

Before discussing this agenda item, Ms. Purdy-Quinlan introduced Barbara Donahue/Archeologist to the members, explaining that she was the original archeologist for 43 Bicknell Street/House of Skulls. She explained that since Barbara's first involvement with Bicknell Street, she has maintained a professional and ongoing interest in the site as she found the history of the skulls to be very interesting to her and her team.

Next Ms. Purdy-Quinlan spoke about the documentary she would be filming, stating that so far she has cast 50 males for the film but needs a total of 60-80 actors to participate and asked the male members of the Commission to volunteer. The film will revolve, in part, around the Thomas Weston Company. She planned on inviting the souls of Thomas Weston Co. back to Weymouth to be a part of it all. She wants to show them the neighborhood and beach area - and wanted to include representatives of the colony.

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she is drafting a letter seeking assistance and has spoken with Mayor Kay about her plans. She then referred to the involvement of Governor John Sanders and Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Plantation, adding she has scheduled an April 6th meeting with the Thomas Weston Company. She told members that last Thanksgiving she attended a Day of Mourning at Plymouth Harbor - and explained what she felt it meant from the Native American Indian's perspective. In referring to the speech made that day she found it to be censored and did not give the full picture, commenting that this is what brought about the Day of Mourning.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to speak about having a film crew there in 1995 - filming the event involving a Wampanoag Indians. She explained that the person who played this role was an actor, an educator who teaches about the Native American culture as well as an American Indian. She spoke about the story that involved King Phillip's head on a pike and how it came about. At that time she asked the actor playing the part 'what about Witawamut's head?' and in his response he suggested she speak to those at Plymouth Plantation about that. She told him she was a film maker and about her plans to film a documentary - asking if he would be interested in being in her film. He said he would and would invite some of his peers. Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted the proper participants to take responsibility for their actions at that time and the injustice that was done there. Overall, she said, it was a story about people killing people - the pilgrims vs. the Wompanoags/Thos. Weston Company/etc.

Further, Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she wanted to inform people about the enormity of the event, by including 60-80 men who were living in the wilderness, which she felt have never being recognized. She noted that the Massachusetts Historical Commission acknowledges this history. She said that in 2007 they sought their guidance re. 43 Bicknell Street, adding Ms. Donahue has a letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission which confirms this. She then spoke about the money they received from the CPC (Conservation Preservation Committee) in the past to fund Ms. Donahue's research and her 2009 report on the findings. She told members that her report has been filed with the MHC, but they have commented that they find the findings at 43 Bicknell St. 'inconclusive'.

Ms. Donahue said the report is viewed as the 'oral' history of the site - adding that sadly, they never found Lord's diary which, she felt, could have made the difference. She said in summary, there still remains a lot of missing information.

Chairman Walker said he heard a lot of artifacts went to Princeton by way of a Weymouth geologist.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to give Ms. Donahue and her team credit for doing a \$25,000 study for \$10,000.

Ms. Donahue said in her research of the site she did not find anything of consequence from that earlier time period, just a few minor items. She felt the property was never really used through time. In regard to the test pits done by her/her team - she described them as being dug every 10 meters, commenting that possibly no one was living in the area where they dug the test pits.

Chairman Walker said that the area could have been farmland back then.

Ms. Donahue said that a friend of hers did some similar work, looking for a tomb with scans - but found nothing. She said that the walls were checked for the skulls with a handheld GPR at which time they found some voids in the wall where the circles were, but again found no disturbance there. She described

it as a fine line, adding the story they have to rely on is viewed as oral history. She wanted members to know that 'something' was found in the wall - commenting she would love to find the diary which she felt would help find the tomb. She also spoke about a passage in the basement.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the 370th anniversary which took place 20 years ago - and the killings that took place at Wessagusset. She said at that time she was building her house and wanted to do a candlelight vigil at the site. She got in touch with Indian Chief One-Bear, who she quickly added has his funeral this date. She said back in 1996 she received a document about the site from Jack Frost, put it aside and saved it - but never read it until recently which she found includes valuable information regarding the site and the Wall of Skulls. At this point she read from Mr. Frost's paper, which she said was used by a tour guide on Wessagusset bus tours back in 1972.

Members were interested in having a copy of the write-up and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan offered to have it scanned and emailed to all.

In regard to the information in the document re. the location, Chairman Walker asked if possibly the skulls could have been moved to north country, with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replying "it's not them".

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would like to take the 390th Anniversary one step further. She told members that she met with a producer from the History Channel, who advised her to do the film as a documentary feature film, based on it being in that category it could then it could be entered into various film festivals (Cannes, Tribeca). She added that Ben Affleck and Matt Damon expressed an interest in her story. She said that she plans on filming the documentary with the men as well as the archeologist working in the basement telling a story that started 390 years ago. She said the basic gist of the film will be "are they really there?" She recommended to anyone who was interested in this story to read the book "Cape Cod" by William Martin as it includes a chapter on Witawamet's head.

Ms. Dorey asked if only one house was built on the parcel at 43 Bicknell.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied 'yes', also informing members that the architect for 43 Bicknell also designed Emery Estate.

Chairman Walker questioned the authenticity of the new document presented by Ms. Purdy-Quinlan this evening and she responded that it is documented by Governor Bradford - but wanted to clarify that it is only the author's side of the story.

Referring to the document, Ms. Donahue noted that it the wording states the following: 'carefully buried to the west of the house'. She asked 'are they really there and if so will they be protected'? She explained that you just can't go in there and start digging. She then referred to the Massachusetts Historical Commission's letter that included the proper way to proceed with/deal with a historic site.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that they have received the support of the property owner referred to in Mr. Frost's letter, just in case they do want to do some research there. She explained to the members that at this point the owner may not be able to keep the property due to financial problems. The property owner told them that if she does sell it she will be sure to include a 'preservation restriction' on the deed. She wanted the members to review the new document, pointing out that she has gone forward with the first step in the research, now she needs help in moving on to the next level. She said they want

to continue to look for the skulls, explaining that when she does the filming with a professional film crew, she wants it to look like they are going in for the very first time.

Ms. Donahue added that they also want to be careful about releasing any info, voicing her concern for 'pot hunters'. She personally saw this task as a challenge and responsibility.

Mr. Lundin asked if she thought the skulls might have been reburied after the foundation went in and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied 'yes'.

Chairman Walker referred to the Massachusetts Unmarked Burial Law.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan acknowledged that and explained that they can go in and do GPR, which she said is not invasive and then if something is found, they can move forward and pursue additional funds with the CPC - then move on to M H C and request that the house go on the National Historic Register. She next spoke about Osco/Terrell burial site stating when they found something there; they were given certain restrictions for protection purposes.

Ms. Donahue asked if they did field work there and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied 'yes'.

Ms. Donahue said they could move forward with an archeological survey and/or Massachusetts Historical Commission to do field work - as they would pay for this service.

Ms. Donahue recommended that they go with the GPR first, adding this person (Russ Kempton) could do a grid - although it was acknowledged that he could come up with false positives. It was felt that it would still narrow down the area. It was noted that work was done on the east side of the house. She also suggested that they do test pits in the area where nothing was found. When this work was done they could meet with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to emphasize that this was all 'time sensitive'. With regard to the cost she was estimating about \$2,000. She said she would like to pursue the funding with the CPC.

Mr. Lundin asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan why she thought the matter was 'time sensitive' with Ms. Donahue replying that actually it could be done anytime.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan in disagreement.

At this point it was noted that member Dan Mathewson was the Commission's representative on this Community Preservation Committee and he could speak to the matter when/if it came up on their agenda.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to pursue sending a letter to the Conservation Preservation Committee requesting they fund this GPR research at 43 Bicknell Street.

Discussion:

It was noted that the Committee could approve funding at anytime throughout the year - that there was no deadline for having your funding requests to them.

Ms. Lehrer pointed out that the CPC would want to know specifics - and that they would be asking if there was anything new since the last time the Weymouth Historical Commission went before them.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said the request could be based on the information in Mr. Frost's letter that she just discovered.

Chairman Walker suggested that Ms. Donahue and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan draft the letter from the Commission for the CPC, urging that they use strong language.

It was stated that the GPR person, Russ Kempton, also has good information about the site.

Ms. Lehrer asked Ms. Donahue if she felt that additional GPR work was warranted and her answer was 'yes'.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved that the Weymouth Historical Commission present a letter to the Conservation Preservation Committee seeking funds for a GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) survey at 43 Bicknell based on newly discovered evidence/letter.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would scan Mr. Frost's letter and email copies to the members (and recording secretary).

It was noted that past Commission member Tom Curtis, who represented the Commission on the CPC, did not have access to the letter previously and did not present this letter at that time. It was also agreed that Mr. Mathewson will do it when the time arises for the Commission as their current representative on the CPC.

Ms. Lehrer referred Ms. Purdy-Quinlan to Kate Marshall in her office who is the liaison for the CPC.

In reference to the proper procedure re. awarding contracts in the Town, Ms. Lehrer explained to Ms. Purdy-Quinlan that depending on the amount of money, the requirement is to obtain three bids before awarding the contract.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told the male members of the Commission that filming will take place on April 6th.

Chet Kevitt award for 2013

Nominees for this award will be discussed at the April meeting.

New Business - cont'd

Ms. Lehrer noted that she and Jim Clarke wanted to confirm to the members that any agenda items of any substance must be placed on the agenda in advance of the meeting and not addressed under New Business - referring to 43 Bicknell.

It was agreed that this policy will be followed in the future.

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King Philips War Memorial & Surrounding Town Land

There was nothing new to report on this agenda item.

Next Meeting Date

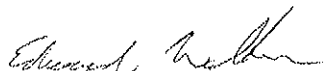
Chairman Walker noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, April 3rd, 2013.

VI. Adjournment

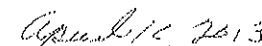
Ms. Dorey moved to adjourn at 8:25 PM.

Mr. Lundin seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED



Ed Walker, Chairman, WHC



Date

Respectfully submitted,
Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary