

2023 DEC 20 AM 10:03

TOWN OF WEYMOUTH, MA.
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 24, 2023
MCCULLOCH BUILDING - 6:00 PM

Present: Jim Clarke, Mark Schneider, Cathy Torrey, Kerri Donnelly, Steve McCloskey, Jenn Donovan

Staff: Eric Schneider

1. Demolition Delay Public Hearing - 864-884 Broad Street

Jim called the meeting of the commission to order at 6PM. Cathy made a motion to open the demolition delay hearing, seconded by Steve. So voted unanimously.

Jim gave an overview of Section 7-201 of the town ordinance and possible actions of the commission. He stated that the applicant would present his request, the commission would ask questions, and then the public could comment and ask questions.

Gerry Kavanaugh, developer, introduced other team members including Eric Papachristos, property owner, and Bill Mensinger, architect from EMBARC, Inc. Gerry noted that they are following the new zoning changes, had looked at possible uses for the building, and said that there was nothing of value left in the building. He stated that they would be willing to work with the town to move the building to another site if that were possible.

Eric discussed his family history in the area and said he bought the Venetian restaurant in 2019. He then purchased the other properties that are part of the development application now before town boards. He noted that buildings are vacant and he wanted to improve the area with his proposal.

Bill explained that the building has had additions and various alterations, the fireplaces are gone, and it would take lots of work to bring the building back to use. He noted the various current building code requirements that would be expensive to meet.

Mark asked about new uses in a different spot. Gerry said they would work with the town if a new site were found.

Kerri asked about the information that it was a stop on the underground railroad in the 1800's. Mark noted that he had not seen a confirmed reference to that, but it would be nice to keep the building.

Eric Schneider asked what was the original tavern, was it the central part of the building.

Jim opened the hearing to public comments.

Debbie Sullivan, President of the Weymouth Historical Society, noted the reference to the underground railroad stop and that it was one of the first taverns in town. She stated that she had received many calls to save the building.

Jodi Purdy-Quinlan said that she had done research on the Rice family and she supported saving the building, noting her involvement in efforts in the past. She would rather see the building moved than demolished but hoped that an archeology survey would be done at the site.

Dave Finney, local architect, felt that the building could be restored like the Warren Tavern in Charlestown. He noted that it had an historic sign marker and was shown on a 1760 map of taverns in Braintree and Weymouth created by John Adams.

Pat O'Leary mentioned the information from the PAL historic survey.

Chris Primiani said it would be great to move the building and save it.

Cathy Torrey mentioned the work to restore the Abigail Adams Birthplace, stating that it could be done.

Linda D'Angelo stated that this was a great opportunity to save a significant building with an important history.

Tom Eldridge noted that he works with buildings of this age and they can be brought up to code. He would rather see it remain where it is. Nathan Goodwin, also a preservation carpenter, agreed with Tom.

Eric Schneider commented that most people here wanted to save the building and we have to work to do that.

Dick Gould expressed concern for saving the character of Jackson Square.

Donna O'Sullivan urged the commission to vote for the delay which would give time to possibly come up with other uses for the building.

Denise Marcotte noted that in Cambridge most older buildings are saved.

Bill Gunville said that he lives across from the site and it would be better to move the building.

He stated that a funeral home is always a funeral home.

Russell Peck, former owner, stated that there were many things in the building that the public isn't aware of.

Paula Mine was glad to see the interest in saving the building and said that the bones of the building were still there. She mentioned a home that had been moved at Fort Hill Street. Mark wondered if a committee should be formed.

Hearing no other public comments, Cathy made a motion to close the hearing at 7:20 PM, seconded by Mark. So voted unanimously.

Mark made a motion to designate the Rice Tavern, 864-884 Broad Street a "preferably preserved" building subject to the six month delay process, seconded by Kerri. So voted unanimously.

Jenn noted that she was pleased how the process worked. Jim thanked attendees and called for a five minute recess prior to completing the night's agenda.

2. Minutes - A motion to approve the 9/5/23 minutes was made by Cathy, seconded by Steve. So voted unanimously.

3. Historic House Sign - The commission reviewed an application for an historic house sign at 47 Torrey Street. A motion was made to approve the sign request by Jenn, seconded by Steve. So voted unanimously.

4. Newsletter - Kerri stated that a draft of the November newsletter would be out by the end of the week.

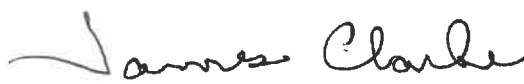
5. Emery Estate - Jenn reported that the committee was meeting monthly to discuss how to engage the community in the house. She said that a quilt show and open house tea were being discussed. She noted that grant applications were submitted, but are delayed at the State review board due to the 2023 change in leadership.

6. Development Update - Eric noted that the Jackson Square project would be back before the Conservation commission on November 14 and the BZA on November 15.

7. CPC Update - Cathy reported no new meetings. Jim stated the the map restoration project was moving forward after the signed proposal was resent to the restoration company.

8. Next Meeting - The next meeting will be on November 21.

9. Adjournment - A motion to adjourn at 7:45 was made by Cathy, seconded by Jenn. So voted unanimously.



James Clarke, Chair

Weymouth Historical Commission

12/19/23

Date