

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION

February 13, 2012 Meeting

Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT: Chairman Ed Walker, Mary Dorey, Jody Purdy-Quinlan, Don Mathewson and Cathy Torrey

ABSENT: Ted Clarke and Rodney Lundin

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning and Community Development

Call to Order 7 p.m.

Chairman Walker opened the February 18th, 2012 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission at 7:08 PM.

Approval of January 18th, 2012 Minutes

Ms. Torrey moved to approve the minutes of the January 18th, 2012 meeting.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Reports - Town Liaison

Legion Field Wall Update

Ms. Lehrer reported that bids are due for the Legion Field Wall on February 22nd/23rd.

Fogg Library Update/Request for \$400,000 in Funds

Ms. Lehrer informed members that the host community agreement re. Southfield Mitigation Funds in the amount of \$400,000 is now before the Town Council.

Emery Estate Update

An Emery Estate meeting is scheduled for 2/16/2012 at 7:30 PM at the McCulloch School.

Fore River Bridge Update

Ms. Lehrer informed members that a meeting that addressed on the proposed design of the Fore River Bridge was held last Thursday, February 2nd, 2012.

Letter from Malcolm Feeney of West Wareham

Ms. Lehrer reported to members that she received a letter from Malcolm Feeney from West Wareham whereby he requested input/assistance from the Commission re. connecting the Iron Heritage Trail. She gave members a copy of Mr. Feeney's letter in case they would like to contact him (she gave members a copy of the letter).

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Weymouth's Upcoming Anniversary

Ms. Lehrer referred members to a booklet created by the residents of the Town of Hingham re. their 375th Anniversary - picked up by member Don Mathewson. It was felt that it might be utilized for Weymouth's upcoming anniversary.

Plaque Application from the 1st Church & Historical Plaque Presentation Update

Ms. Lehrer informed members that she received an application for a Historical Plaque from the First Church of Weymouth.

Ms. Lehrer went on to say that she would be sending out invitations to the (12) homeowners approved for historical plaques for the official presentation of those plaques. She wanted to coordinate a presentation ceremony, possibly with Mayor Kay in attendance. She planned on contacting Yankee Woodcarvers in Braintree to construct the last of the approved plaques - and once they are all set she will coordinate a date that will work for all.

Chester Kevitt Award Update

Chairman Walker noted that they did not award the Chester Kevitt Award in 2011 - consideration will be given for a 2012 award.

Old Business

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to Weymouth's upcoming 390th Anniversary, but noted that since Mr. Lundin was not present this evening they would probably need to postpone it until the March meeting. She was suggesting that they address it further with Mayor Kay and the Events Committee, as well as, the Abigail Adams Society and the Weymouth Historical Society. She asked the members if they had any thoughts.

Ms. Dorey agreed with the idea of planning something and suggested a letter go to all of those groups Ms. Purdy-Quinlan cited by the Chairman for the Commission. She noted that for the 375th Anniversary they had a parade/float as well as historical bus tours, which she commented, were well received by the public.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to note that the tour began at the Tufts Library/Museum and went to North and East Weymouth as well as to South Weymouth and the Landing - for a \$5.00 ticket.

It was noted that the event usually takes place the last weekend in September and is usually coordinated with Pumpkin Day.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan suggested all related committees be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss it further. She offered to draft a letter for the Chairman's signature.

Emery Estate Planning Committee Update (cont'd)

Ms. Torrey, who also serves as a member of the Emery Estate Planning Committee, addressed their first meeting at which time there was an analysis of the property and they also made suggestions and offered ideas for its future use. She noted that Mayor Kay was in attendance. The Mayor said she would like a short term/4 month committee.

To get some ideas on possible future use, Ms. Torrey and other committee members took a field trip this past weekend to a horse farm in Canton. They think Weymouth would be ruled out for this type

of use, because of inadequate space - adding 24 acres would be ideal for this purpose. She pointed out that size and expense are important factors - and manure (odor and disposal) was a concern. She said once you had manure on site it would have to be trucked out after to an approved site.

Ms. Torrey went on to say that they also visited the Endicott Mansion in Dedham for ideas. The mansion was originally built in the late 1800's for a family of four. The Endicott family left their home to the Town of Dedham. There were some suggestions for a Community Center, which would enable all groups in Town to use it at no cost.

Ms. Dorey asked about maintenance and Ms. Torrey said they have an annual budget of \$400,000. She wanted to note that the Endicott Estate has a lot of similarities to the Emery Estate. She further explained that the Endicott Estate can only accommodate 100 people for events - which would be good for events/celebrations such as a wedding, but she quickly added some also set up a tent on the grounds for this purpose. She wanted to point out that the community of Dedham has a lot of money; i. e., \$1.5 million - and that the community divides it up. She said that they really had not done much work on it until lately when they increased parking facilities. She added that it is a community where all work together.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan agreed, adding she saw it as a point of pride to the community and Ms. Torrey agreed.

Ms. Torrey said that the site contains a total of 85 parking spaces.

Chairman Walker asked about handicapped access and Ms. Torrey replied that they did have handicapped access on the first floor, adding that the 2nd floor was used for meetings.

Chairman Walker asked if they had a live-in caretaker and Ms. Torrey responded 'no', that the facility is run by the Town Manager. She noted that they charge \$3,500 for wedding rentals, with a reduced cost for resident's of \$2,500. She felt it was a good example for Weymouth. She pointed out that Dedham had been struggling to get the word out about the Endicott Estate's availability.

In reference to older properties in and around Boston, Ms. Purdy-Quinlan spoke about a new TV series that focus's on Boston in 1885 entitled 'Gilded Lillies' (which is actually set in a NY hotel).

Ms. Torrey commented that the Endicott Estate has also been used for movie shots. She went on to describe the third place they visited which was a farm in Newton (this property was also left to the City of Newton). It consisted of one acre of land. She explained that the policy there is you buy a 'share' of the land and grow vegetables on the site throughout the season and you pay \$450 a share along with the commitment to work 12 hours on the land. She said that a couple of caretakers live there. She commented that the city of Newton has different demographics. In reference to the sale of the produce they grow, they base the cost of their vegetables on Whole Foods selling price. In speaking to those who participate in this program, some were concerned with the high maintenance cost and the possibility of tearing it down because of that.

Ms. Torrey went on to say that she viewed Emery House as having great potential for a vocational/technical program.

Ms. Torrey then spoke about the restoration of the Abigail Adams House, noting that the Abigail

Adams Restoration team is from Burlington. She commented that she felt this type of work was an open door for local talent.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan suggested the possibility of a fundraiser.

Ms. Torrey told her that Jim Clarke was looking at that - possibly a road race. She explained that first you need to create a separate non-profit entity. She said that if you are a government agency you are not supposed to ask for money/donations - because it is viewed as being inappropriate.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that she is a friend of William Martin, author of the books Mt. Vernon, Cape Cod and Harvard Yard - and she has kept him updated re. the Emery Estate. He has spoken about making a mini series of George Washington, filming it and its constraints. For example, he would need to shoot at night because of the daily tours. She then described to him Emery Estate that looks so similar to Mount Vernon. He told her that he would love to come and do something here.

Ms. Torrey thought it would be great to involve Jim Clarke in this process.

Chairman Walker said they could use the history of that house.

Ms. Torrey said that Mary Mathewson/WETC cable filmed an interview when the family lived there, at which time it was noted that the estate housed some great antiques including a grand piano - but, she commented, the interview never made cable.

Chairman Walker pointed out that the rooms were small.

Ms. Torrey agreed, and then pointed out that since Weymouth doesn't have a community center maybe that would be a great use. People could pay a fee to use the Estate. She said the committee is open to all suggestions.

Chairman Walker told her there were prisoners that could be used for labor purposes and Ms. Torrey acknowledged this, adding they are from a halfway house.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that she has closed her Children's Theatre after 40 years, adding that she has hundreds of costumes from the theatre that could be used for the Theatre in the Green.

Ms. Torrey suggested she bring her ideas to the committee.

Ms. Dorey said that Class Reunions have also been suggested.

Ms. Torrey wanted to be cognizant of any 'conflict of interests'. She went on to say that she had lunch with the Associate Pastor at the First Church, who was a close associate of Mr. Emery and the Pastor could see it used as a 'retreat center'. Lastly she stated they need to consider 'how do we develop' the estate.

Fore River Bridge Draft Letter

Ms. Lehrer referred to draft letters she had for the Fore River Bridge.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said attended a recent meeting on the Bridge with Mayor Kay in attendance. At

that meeting the Mayor spoke strongly about what has taken place re. the Fore River Basin; i. e., Edgar Station, old temporary bridge, Algonquin Gas line, etc. and spoke about promises made and broken. She was pleased to hear the Mayor take this stand. Additionally, she was happy to acknowledge that US Congressman Steve Lynch was also there and heard this, understanding that he might soon become Weymouth's new Congressman because of the recent re-districting. It was noted that in the past Steve Lynch was also an ironworker with knowledge of bridges - and he said that he dislikes the idea of a Bascule Bridge. Rep. James Murphy was also in attendance and voiced his opposition to the design of a Bascule Bridge. It was noted that Mass. Dept. of Transportation/D.O.T. reports that the Coast Guard has said that they need a lift bridge because of the design of the port and its future use; i. e., to accommodate super tankers 1,000 ft. long.

It was stated that the bridge will be a \$300 million dollar project and the proposed design was viewed as a huge monstrosity. It was felt that Weymouth doesn't need it, want it nor can they afford it or the disruption it will bring - especially in view of the fact that Citgo could pay for a new pipeline.

Chairman Walker felt that Fore River should still be designated as a duty free port. He said they would like to see a 25% design of a Bascule Bridge drawn up - giving the people at least that much.

It was agreed that it was time for the draft letters to go out.

Ms. Lehrer wanted to run them by Jim Clarke first.

The Chairman asked if Jim Clarke saw a problem with the letters the way they were worded and Ms. Lehrer referred to the use of the word 'Agreement', noting that Agreement did not call for the approval of the Commission/Town.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to **strike** the following sentence from the 9/20/11 draft letter going to the Executive Director/State Historic Preservation Officer from the Weymouth Historical Commission (the 2nd paragraph) "*The SHPO has never appeared before the Commission to gather input on the architectural design in accordance with the agreement.*"

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Walker cited a similar bridge in Portland, Maine as an example.

Ms. Torrey commented that she is very familiar with that bridge, using it often in the summer months - and that the approaches are a lot longer than you would expect. She said when they rebuilt it; it took a lot more property, which meant that City of Portland had to eliminate plans they had for a shopping mall.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan emphasized that when three communities are so strongly opposed to the DOT's proposed bridge (Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth) the reasons for the opposition should be addressed. She also stated, "what is the real need for a port that will handle 1,000 ft. ships - it seems unrealistic." She said she was horrified by the thought of it.

First Church Historical Plaque

Ms. Torrey moved to approve a historical plaque for the First Church, with the sign worded per their request as follows "c1623 - 1st Church - Weymouth Historical Commission"

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan seconded.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chester Kevitt Award (Cont'd)

Chairman Walker asked members to give some thought to the person they might want to nominate for this award.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked about a list of past nominees.

Ms. Torrey asked about the requirements.

It was noted by Ms. Purdy-Quinlan that Richard Pattison, past member, was a recipient.

Ms. Lehrer said the requirement was that the person must have made a contribution to Weymouth's history.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that they have awarded more than one person in a single year in the past.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan suggested Wilfred Mathewson.

This will be discussed further at the March meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 12th, 2012.

Adjournment

Ms. Dorey moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Ms. Torrey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED



Ed Walker, Chairman, WHC

3/12/2012

Date

Respectfully submitted,
Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary