

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION

January 11th, 2011 Meeting

Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT:

Ted Clarke/Chairman, Ed Walker, Mary Dorey, Phil Smith, Don Matheson
and Cathy Torrey.

ALSO PRESENT:

Jim Clarke, Director/Planning and Community Development
Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning
and Community Development
Town Councillor Victor Papp
Gary Peters, Co-Director/Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association (FRBNA)

Call to Order 7 p.m.

Chairman

Chairman Clarke called the January 11th, 2011 meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Minutes

Mr. Walker moved to approve the minutes of the December 14th, 2010 meeting as amended.
Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

REPORTS - Town Liaison

Fog Library Update

Mr. Clarke reported that there was no new news on the library, but reconfirmed that the exterior work on the library has been completed. He noted that the library was opened to the public on December 11th, 2010 and hosted by the Columbian Square Merchants Association. Rob Maclean the new library director said that all who attended had a great time. Lastly he informed members that there had been a problem with the furnace and it needed to be replaced. This has been done - and this will eliminate the need for this expense in the future.

Meeting House Historic District

The Meeting House Historic District was officially approved on 12/13/2010 by the federal government for entry into the National Historic Register. They have received the official placard - and at this point he distributed copies of the certificate for the members. He suggested that they might want to send one to each of the property owners located within the district, along with a cover letter explaining the designation.

RECEIVED

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OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
WEYMOUTH, MASS

Mr. Smith moved to send a copy of the certificate along with a letter of explanation to all the property owners located within the Meeting House Historic District.
Ms. Dorey seconded.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Legion Wall Update

Mr. Clarke reported that he made a presentation to the CPC/Community Preservation Committee re. Phase 2 at a cost of \$240,000 for the Legion Field Wall. This amount will cover the cost of the purchase/installation of iron fencing that will go between the brick piers. This proposal was based on the recommendation of the architect. He said he would like the architect to come before the Commission and describe the proposed work and members were also in favor. Additionally he said he was looking forward to Phase 3.

Next Mr. Clarke reported that the proposal for Homestead in the amount of \$90,000 went before CPC and that Mayor Kay supported the request and has submitted the Measure to the Town Council for consideration at their upcoming meeting on Tuesday 1/18/2011.

Weymouth Civil War Anniversary Celebration Update-Jim Clarke
Mr. Clarke informed members that there will be a meeting on Thursday evening of this committee and at that point they will continue to move forward with their plans. He said that some members of the committee would be working on the text for their individual lectures, adding at this point they could use one or two more volunteers for this purpose. They also will be discussing the venue and how to publicize the event(s). He told members that recently there was a nice article in the Weymouth News about the event. Further he said he would continue to update them at the February meeting.

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan spoke about a person by the name of Rodney Lundeen who lived at Linden Ponds and had a great Civil War collection, adding they he grew up in the Blanchard House.
Mr. Clarke will follow through with contacting Mr. Lundeen.

Old Business - Fore River Bridge

Chairman Clarke reminded members that he had emailed them information on the Fore River Bridge, including a drafted resolution from Town Councilor Victor Papp and would like a motion to accept the resolution and to discuss it further.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to accept the wording of the letter/resolution as submitted by TC Papp.
Mr. Walker seconded.

Discussion:

TC Papp said he wanted to acknowledge and commend Gary Peters for his help with the process, adding that he ferreted out documents and made sure the information was as accurate as possible re. State's Preservation Officer. In summary he felt the proposed resolution hits the important historical aspects, adding the final product was a collaborative work. He hoped that the Town Council would adopt it - as well as the Historical Commission.

Cathy Torrey wanted to state for the record that she was not in favor of supporting the 'bascule' bridge, as she didn't see it as being historical unless it had been in place for 50 years, adding this would only be an imitation of the actual bridge. She realized many could view it as having a historical design and saw that as acceptable.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan responded that she likened it to the Central Square Historical District, adding that some people argue that older houses with vinyl siding were not considered historical, commenting that it was not so much that, but the fact that it was in keeping with the streetscape. She felt that the design and structure were similar to what they once were - and lastly she supported the design of the bascule bridge because it is similar to what had been there.

Next Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to address the wording in TC Papp's resolution, stating that she thought they did a great job but wanted to know why (President) John Adams name was left out (in Paragraph 1). She felt his name should be included insofar as mention was made of Abigail Adams and John Quincy Adams.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to make the following recommended changes:

Paragraph 1: Add - John Adams

Paragraph 2: change Massachusetts Bay Watershed to read Boston Harbor Watershed

Paragraph 3: Add: and overlooks Wessagusset, the oldest settlement in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (also known as Thomas Weston Colony of 1622)

Paragraph 4: the James Michael Curley Bridge* (it was stated later in the meeting that this was not the original name of the bridge - eliminate??)

Change the wording to say:erected in 1936, crossed over the Fore River and served as the gateway to the majority of South Shore towns south of Boston (eliminating South Boston, Dorchester and many major points South of Boston)

TC Papp thought that was a great suggestion and agreed to do so.

Paragraph 5: change the words General Dynamics to: the Fore River Shipyard (Bethlehem Steel), which dates back to 1884.

Paragraph 6: add the words 'eligible to be'; i. e., style and purpose was eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks, and

Mr. Peters commented that the continuity factor was right on point.

Members agreed that the balance of the resolution as written was fine.

Mr. Walker moved to accept the amendments to the resolution as discussed.
Ms. Dorey seconded.
SO VOTED (Ms. Torrey opposed)

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to accept and approve the resolution as presented by Town Councilor Papp with the approved amendments so made by the Weymouth Historical Commission.
Ms. Dorey seconded.
SO VOTED (Ms. Torrey opposed)

*Ms. Dorey commented that she didn't realize it was originally called the James Michael Curley Bridge, with some members responding, "it wasn't".

It was noted that this letter/resolution would be sent to the following agencies:

- 1) Quincy Historical Commission
- 2) Massachusetts Highway Department
- 3) State Historical Preservation Officer/SHPO
- 4) US Coast Guard
- 5) Federal Highway Administration

It was acknowledged that the Planning Dept. (J. Clarke/J. Leherer) would handle the mailing of the approved letter/resolution.

New Business
Mr. Walker asked with the sale of the power plant, would the previous agreement made by both parties (Edison/Town) would carry over and Mr. Clarke confirmed that it would.

Mr. Walker referred to the guardhouse on Bridge Street asking if it would be saved and Mr. Clarke said it would.

Clapp Memorial
Mr. Walker asked that since the sale of the church (Clapp Memorial) did not go through, would it remain with the church and Mr. Clarke told him that it was still owned by the church.

Mr. Walker asked about its status on the Town's tax roles - since it was still a church.

Ms. Torrey interjected that she felt it was the Town's fault that the church was unable to sell the building, adding the church needed to grow and expand and they were not given the ability to do so. She wanted to note that they didn't abandon the property and were actively trying to sell it - but the Town kept them from achieving their goal.

In response to Mr. Walker's prior question, Mr. Clarke stated that the assessors evaluate the property and they decide if it's use is "not for profit" - at this point he was not sure where it stood, adding it could have happened, he just didn't know.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to propose to the CPC that the Town purchase Clapp Memorial, adding that she had suggested this two meetings ago. She said the Town could sell the McCulloch building and buy Clapp Memorial and transfer the offices in McCulloch to Clapp.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that she agreed with Cathy Torrey, when the church tried to expand the Town didn't work with them. She said that there was a similar situation in the Town of Hingham - when they tried to expand it took them years but they finally achieved their goal. She commented that people were not in favor at the time. She felt they should have asked the question 'how can you expand yet keep the buildings historic integrity' - but this was not longer the case because they have moved away. She asked why the Historical Commission couldn't make the suggestion to sell McCulloch and build houses there - asking 'why can't the Town build houses there and do it as a Redevelopment Authority project - like it was done on Miles Keene Way.

Mr. J. Clarke felt that the idea was interesting, but he would be reluctant to see a motion on it at this time. He told Ms. Purdy-Quinlan if she wanted to speak to Mayor Kay about it, he felt that would be okay, commenting the Town just did something with that property.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she was just trying to think creatively and asked Mr. Clarke what would be the proper protocol to move forward.

Jim Clarke replied that he has had an in-house staff discussion on this subject and felt there were many mitigating circumstances to be considered; such as other parties being involved (such as, people in the neighborhood). He said for now let's see where the church goes next, but if Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to speak with the Mayor about it she should set up an appointment.

Chairman Clarke encouraged Ms. Purdy-Quinlan to do it, but pointed out that he felt McCulloch was worth a lot more than Clapp.

In regard to transferring the town departments (Elder Services for one), Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that the Clapp building also housed an auditorium as well as a gym.

Mr. Clarke said if she does meet with the Mayor on the subject it would then be on the record.

Mr. Smith asked if Clapp Memorial was still for sale.

Mr. Clarke responded that he didn't know. He added that the issue with the property/owners is that the main operation is housed in California and the pastor is no longer here in Weymouth.

Mr. Walker asked Mr. Clarke if he would keep the Commission posted on Clapp and he agreed to do so.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked Mr. Clarke if anything had happened with Wessagusset re. lights.

Mr. Clarke stated that he and Bob O'Connor looked at the location and then asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan if she speaks with the neighbor and she said that she did.

Mr. Clarke first wanted to know before if he worked on getting the light for the pole if the neighbor would be okay with the light shining into her property.

Next, Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that the wetland restoration was doing well. She said they removed all the trash, dead trees, debris, etc. She also informed the members that Ms. Schloss/Conservation Administrator and the State have been out to the site and now she would like to get the Town Arborist out there too for some of his expertise. She said that presently there are about (20) oak trees growing in a bed in the brook, which she felt was a good sign, although she added it needs to be weeded out. She said she saw a bullfrog there too. Lastly she said she would love to get a sign made up and posted if possible, possibly using some CPC money.

Mr. Clarke asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan if she had the text ready for the sign and if so to send it to him, adding that he would look into Voc Tech making it and ask Lowe's for the material.

Chairman Clarke said they also are looking for new signs for the Meeting House Historic District; with Mr. Walker interjecting they are also missing signs in the Central Historic District that he would like to see replaced.

Mr. Walker also asked about the status of the Middle/Washington Street improvement project.

Mr. Clarke said it was coming along, with bids due on 2/15/11, adding if the bid is acceptable they should see construction in the Spring.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated the street work should come up to where the brick ends, adding hopefully they would also clean up the corner from the sidewalk to the Memorial. She also wanted to make sure they would be cognizant of any archaeological artifacts in that area.

Adjournment

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn at 8:05 PM and to meet again on Tuesday, February 8th, 2011.
Ms. Dorey seconded.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ted Clarke, Chair

Date

Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted,