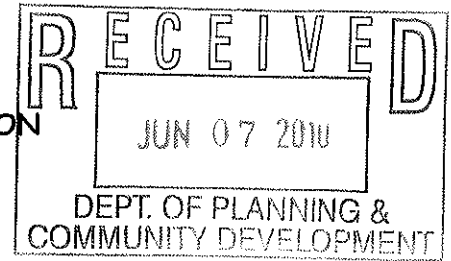


WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room  
February 9th, 2010 Meeting



**PRESENT:** Ted Clarke/Chairman, Mary Dorey, Ed Walker, Joan Rotundo, Don Mathewson, Phil Smith and Jodi Purdy-Quinlan (arrived 7:10, departed 7:35PM)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jody Lehrer, Community Development Coordinator  
Barbara Donahue, RPA, Consultant/Cultural Resource

**Chairman**

Chairman Ted Clarke called the February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

**Minutes - January 12, 2010**

Mr. Walker moved to approve the minutes of the **January 12, 2010** meeting.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**Reports**

a. 43 Bicknell

Chairman Clarke took a moment to introduce Barbara Donahue, who prepared the report on 43 Bicknell Road entitled "Results of an Archeological Intensive (locational) Survey at Bicknell Road, Weymouth, MA."

Ms. Donahue began her presentation by informing members that the report has been accepted by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. She then asked if any of the members had any questions regarding the report.

Mr. Walker asked her about "what they couldn't prove".

Ms. Donahue told members that she agonized over it, adding it was like doing a 'doctorate' - which she viewed as an oral history. She said there is information in a diary by the person who constructed the house and referred to "Two Forts". She said they discovered only bits and pieces of the diary. She commented that things get lost and forgotten quickly unless they are written down at the time - based on her experience. She said this diary was from the 60's/760's and there is no one around now that she could speak to about it. Further complications for her involved the north wall of the house where she found some burials, pointing out that since that time the house had an addition put on, so there was no way of really knowing the details - there was not proof. She couldn't find out who put the circles on the wall (she referred to Lord's book). She did speak to Cindy Lang in reference to her Mom's recollections, but her mother had a stroke and couldn't talk - and when Cindy spoke to her father he did not have much information except that he said 'they are still there'. It appears all data was dumped into his ? computer.

Ms. Donahue explained that in the process the radar went out 15" and from that point they continued to come in closer and closer. Then they saw the circles, adding they could see it in '3D'. She said the story goes that they were pulled out and she added that there didn't appear to be any disturbance there between the circles - so it appeared to be undisturbed.

Ms. Donahue went on to tell the members a story she was told about the property whereby witches there spoke about a burial in Gallows's Hill, but this couldn't be proven - although she felt it was a valid story.

(Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived)

Ms. Donahue said if they could find Lord's diary it would be very helpful. She said they spoke about a colonial buckle, which appeared to be associated with the burial - but she was not sure.

Ms. Donahue further stated that one hole could be excavated out but this would have to be done via a permit from the Ma. Historical Commission - and if this was accomplished they could then proceed with a forensic analysis. She said I don't see how anyone could make up a story like this.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the story that she understood originated with Mr. Adams, a descendent of Henry Adams - who was related to President John Adams (cousin). She said that Grampy Snazzy used something special in the wall so that it 'breathes'. She described this man as being in his 80's and she grew up with this story. She added that she speaks to him once in awhile, but now he is headed for Florida.

Ms. Dorey asked if he might have the diary and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied "no he doesn't have it".

Mr. Walker said he heard it was given to a university, with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan interjecting she heard it was the Weston Observatory.

Ms. Rotondo commented that he went through a lot, informing members she used to drive him places.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan suggested they could advertise some kind of notice and say the WHC is looking for the 'G. Stinson Lord Diary' from 1931-1972.

Mr. Smith pointed out that the work earlier referred to couldn't have been done in the 1890's as concrete foundations weren't used/poured until the 1930's.

Ms. Dorey commented that concrete foundations actually went back to 1909 as her grandfather has one.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she felt it could have been even earlier because the house was first class and probably viewed as innovative for the day.

Ms. Dorey commented that even if the foundation was poured early on, it would have been done in sections.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that the tomb in front of the house where the bodies are buried faces the water. She felt that people that lived there at the time might know more about it.

Ms. Donahue pointed out that only '7 skulls' are mentioned in the book, with no reference to bodies. Also a picture in the book appears to be a slab.

Chairman Clarke said that the report mentions (4) anomalies.

Ms. Donahue corrected the number to being (5) anomalies, noting that there was (1) in another location - inside a closet with shelves. She pointed out that the circles were added after, then came the shelves. She also heard that it was ex-rayed in the 60's, but she didn't think this was correct.

Mr. Walker felt there would have been a news article if an ex-ray was done.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that in 1928 they found the remains of an Indian woman and baby with the skull bashed in at Bicknell School. She said the way the letter was written (Brona Simon/MHC in her 11/12/09 letter), she said it was okay and the report showed no sensitive archeological data.

Ms. Donahue explained that you don't publicize the location of the site in an effort to eliminate any concerns re. trophy hunters.

Chairman Clarke found it to be a good story, adding that it should be told the way they know it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the sources in Barbara Donahue's report, adding she thought it would be a good idea to consolidate all sources in one location - including the deeds. She felt it would be pretty fascinating to see all the information compiled in one report.

Chairman Clarke agreed, adding if someone picks up on it in 15-20 years it would all be there in one place.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that she is making a movie out of it, adding she has been writing and researching it for 32 years. She said she was thrilled with the progress that's been made since 2006 - and was very pleased with the Town being made aware of the history. She commented that this report will now protect the site and now the owners Gale/Tom are aware of its history.

Ms. Donahue noted that at this point the MHC has it listed and they will have to be contacted regarding any future developments or regarding the site, adding that it falls under the State Archeologist.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred back to the house noting that there was no cellar just a slab. At this point she wanted to commend Barbara Donohue for going above and beyond her charge in her research and the detail in her report. She didn't want to think the archeological work was a waste.

Chairman Clarke commented that the research/report also eliminates other possibilities.

Ms. Donahue told members that the test pits are performed every 5 meters so there could be other things there. With regard to Wessagusset, they found it to be very fluid. She noted that at one time town of Winthrop came all the way down to Wessagusset - confirming there has been a definite change in the coastline and that even some islands have either disappeared or changed in size. She went on to say that the entire area was being used and bodies have been found in and around the area.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that some areas in '64 referred to Indian dugouts and they went down pretty deep. She said she used to play in them. Now the holes have sunken and you can see them all. She felt if they did some digging there they would find something.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that she spoke to Brona and was told that you are supposed to preserve the site as they are and it is preferred you don't go around the site and disturb it.

Ms. Donahue agreed.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that when they were clearing the area they found some black material that was not identified, so she went on line and discovered that it could be part of an ancient coast line, and the material could possibly be 'black jet' - probably coal mainly found in England and Scotland. She also learned that it could be found in a petrified forest and it was used for burials. She felt that 'iron mongers' came here and melted down the metals that is why the area was so popular, adding that it was abundant in coal and fish.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan felt strongly that the Massachusetts Indians never got their rightful place in history; i. e., Wampanoag, Massasoit - as did the Pilgrims. She said the area shows (4) civilizations coming together and what eventually happened to them.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan then told a story about Massasoit, Hobomack, pilgrims (Thomas Weston, Puritans/Separatists) - in summary it's a story about people doing in people. She added that she has been documenting this in writings and in videos.

Ms. Donahue commented that she felt there was a real valid story here, adding she has found in her research people don't go back far enough. She then told a story about the research that was done re. the creation of the South Boston seawall, not a complete story - again emphasizing they didn't go back far enough.

It was noted that Mr. Lord died with no children.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that a nephew who lives in Connecticut took a lot of his personal belongings, adding some were thrown away and some were sold in yard sales. She went on to say that when they worked on the Town's 350th anniversary, Stimson had a lot of items on display. He gave her the rights to publish "Two Forts to Destiny". She said it was sold for \$25 with the money used to benefit the Park.

The meeting with Ms. Donahue concluded.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan and Ms. Donahue left.

b. Town Liaison

At this point Ms. Lehrer referred to the Grange Building, speaking about the fire there and informing members the building was a total loss. She pointed out that since the lot did not meet the zoning requirements/minimal size for a house lot it would probably be purchased/sold to an abutter.

Ms. Lehrer then asked Mr. Mathewson about the map he created, stating that she will order 500 pamphlets with the map and 25 posters.

Ms. Lehrer then reported on the following:

Re. Fogg Library - the sub bids are due on the exterior tomorrow.

Reuse Committee - the next meeting will be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at the South Shore Bank

43 Bicknell - Ms. Lehrer had a copy of the report with her for anyone who would like to see it.

Weymouth Landing/Meeting House District- this is still on hold and she was told the process could take up to (2) years.

Next Ms. Lehrer told members that Jim Clarke asked that they display the poster given to them by the Massachusetts Historical Commission on historical homes at Town Hall - and to include a note that states the DVD's are on sale.

Ms. Lehrer then asked the members that planned to meet with Mayor Kay for a date (Chairman Clarke, Mr. Walker, Mr. Smith) and they agreed on any Tuesday morning from 9:30 AM on. Ms. Lehrer will follow through with the Mayor for a specific date/time.

Ms. Lehrer then reminded members that they would need to take the Ethics test required to be taken by all Committees/Boards/Commissions and town employees - and gave them the following website to do so: <http://db.state.ma.us/ethics/quiz>

Once the members have completed the test they will be given a page to print validating that they have taken/passed the test and she would pass it on to the HR Dept. (hopefully by the next meeting).

Ms. Lehrer received a letter from Elaine Bugby Meuse who lives in E. Braintree - which spoke about items she has of historical value that came from 630 Broad Street - her family lived there for 55 years; i. e., old postcards of Weymouth, a ledger book (from the Martell family business/Front Street). She stated that Ms. Meuse was very passionate about history and wanted to know if the Historical Commission would like them.

Members agreed that they would and asked Ms. Lehrer to thank her for them.

Fore River Bridge Replacement Update - there will be a meeting sponsored by the Ma. Highway Dept. on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM at Hingham Town Hall for those who would like to attend.

At this point Mr. Walker asked about the status of the guard house at the base of the Fore River Bridge and Ms. Lehrer said it is still there and accessible.

#### Museum cases

Mr. Walker told members that he is still looking for a metal 2-drawer file cabinet/legal size that locks for keeping historical items of value safe.

Mr. Smith thought he might check with the School Dept.

Mr. Walker suggested that the items could possibly be stored in the library, along with the Bible.

#### c. CPC

Community Preservation Committee - Mr. Mathewson reported that there was no new update at this time.

#### Unfinished Business

Chairman Clarke referred to the 'architectural preservation district' and said that Jim Clarke didn't think there was a lot of hope for one, but the Chairman said when they meet with the Mayor they will discuss it further. He then asked the members 'if we chose to pursue it what would we want to call it and what area/building(s) would it encompass?'

Mr. Walker said he would like to concentrate on specific buildings within a district.

Chairman Clarke felt that should have something definite in mind when they speak to the Mayor.

Mr. Walker suggested the Town Hall, adding they would want to protect its historical design/significance and to preserve it - with the goal of keeping unsightly things from encroaching on the building that won't distract from its historical integrity. He thought it would be a good idea to start there with something small. He then referred to the Jefferson School, noting that now if they want to make a change to the exterior they would first have to come before the Commission for their approval - additionally they have the first 'buy back' on the building. He said that the Town Hall and Jefferson come together. He felt they could initially specify these two buildings and the YMCA, protecting each building individually. He pointed out that being designated a Historical District doesn't allow for this type of more stringent protection.

Ms. Dorey said it would protect the 'archeological significance of the buildings' and Chairman Clarke acknowledged she was correct. The process would require a 2/3 vote (for protection) of the Town Council, with Mr. Walker interjecting - it would first need to go before Mayor Kay.

Ms. Lehrer added that it would also include the MHC being involved in the process.

Chairman Clarke said they would need to select people to serve on this commission - with MHC input.

Ms. Dorey noted that alternations would be excluded, it would be for the Commission to review; i. e., the type of siding (restrict vinyl), storm windows, doors, etc.

Chairman Clarke pointed out that it was less restrictive, but again it would still have to go before the Town Council.

Ms. Lehrer said it might involve going to look at some houses.

Ms. Rotondo commented there were many beautiful homes in Weymouth (some beautiful Victorians near Jackson Square) and felt they might consider field trips.

Chairman Clarke suggested they could say 'any building over 100 years old, plus certain civic buildings'.

Ms. Rotondo next referred to Weymouth Landing - noting that some of the buildings located there are empty now and asked if any would be saved.

Mr. Smith commented there was only one worth saving which to his knowledge was the oldest "The Olde Brick Grille".

Mr. Walker said the Jim Clarke was trying to get photos for the railroad station moved to a more visible location, as opposed to where they are located now.

Ms. Lehrer did not know the status of the photos and suggested that Mr. Walker call Jim Clarke directly on it.

Mr. Walker then asked if they were going to uncover part of the river and Ms. Lehrer replied 'no, they have no money for it now.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn at 8:09 PM.

Seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED



Ted Clarke, Chair



Date

Respectfully submitted, Susan DeChristoforo

Recording Secretary