

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
September 13th, 2011 Meeting
Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

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RECEIVED
TOWN OF WEYMOUTH
CLERK

PRESENT: Chairman Ed Walker, Ted Clarke, Don Mathewson, Cathy Torrey and Jody Purdy-Quinlan arrived at 7:30 PM.

ABSENT: Mary Dorey

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

Town Councilor Victor Papp
Gary Peters, Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association

Call to Order 7 p.m.

Chairman Walker called the September 13th, 2011 meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Minutes

Mr. Clarke moved to approve the minutes of the June 14th, 2011 meeting.

Ms. Torrey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Reports

Town Liaison

Ms. Lehrer informed members that the bids for the Legion Field fence have been received and the low bid was \$104,300.

Emery Estate Update

Ms. Lehrer reported that the Request for Proposals for the Emery Estate market analysis is due September 21st. Next step calls for Mayor Kay to appoint a committee who will be overseeing the project.

Abigail Adams House

Next Ms. Lehrer informed members that the construction specifications are being prepared for Abigail Adams House - items to be addressed include the heat, electricity and windows.

New Member Update

Mr. Rod Lundeen has submitted his resume for consideration as a member of the Historical Commission.

Announcements

The Weymouth Landing Merchants will be hosting the next Farmers Market.

Wessagusset Garden

Jim Clarke is presently working on the lights for the Wessagusset Garden.

Application for a historical plaque to be considered for 51 Charles St

Next Mr. Ed Fetter addressed the Commission regarding his request for approval of a historical plaque for his property located at 51 Charles Street (close to Whitman's Pond and McDonald's Funeral Home on Middle Street). He told members that he visited the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds and was able to trace the house back to 1851 where he found documentation of a transfer of the property. He informed members that the house/property was originally owned by Edwin Clapp, but he wasn't sure that Edwin Clapp lived in the house.

Mr. Clarke stated that Edwin Clapp owned the property at the end of Charles Street.

It was also noted that Edwin Clapp Memorial YWCA was named after his son.

Mr. Fetter told members that the house was pretty much in its original condition, with nothing altered with the exception of the kitchen which was modernized in the 1950's.

Mr. Clarke asked if had looked into restoration work and he said he hadn't pursued it but his father-in-law was pretty handy in this area.

Mr. Fetter said that 1861 was as far back as he could trace ownership, noting that Mr. Little sold it to Thomas Humphrey at that time.

Mr. Clarke told him that there were a lot of Civil War structures in Weymouth and in that area.

Mr. Fetter told members he wasn't sure of the year he should put in the application.

Ms. Lehrer suggested they go with the year he could document. She confirmed with Mr. Fetter that he didn't want to include a name on the plaque and he acknowledged this.

Ms. Lehrer said they would use 'circa 1851' for the wording of the house sign.

Chairman Walker referred to the 1903 Weymouth Town Report, which listed what was on the property at that time and its evaluation.

Mr. Mathewson interjected that he has a list of dates that go back 100 years.

Chairman Walker stated that he recalled visiting the Edwin Clapp shoe factory when he was a child - when they closed it.

Mr. Fetter referred to the year 1851 commenting he had a hard time finding the deed, as there was no street listing at that time, commenting it only mentioned Whitman's Pond.

Mr. Clarke asked if anyone knew how Charles St. got its name and Mr. Fetter pointed out that one of the first owners of record was Charles Humphrey, adding that there were many houses in this area built in the same style.

Mr. Clarke suggested that maybe it was because many of those homeowners worked for Clapp.

Mr. Clarke moved to approve the historical sign for 51 Charles Street with verbiage.

Ms. Torrey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ms. Lehrer told Mr. Fetter that she would contact him when the sign is ordered, adding they usually order them when they have a few at a time that have been approved - and that they usually hold a ceremony which Mayor Kay attends.

Chairman Walker asked who the Clapp Memorial was named after and the name suggested was David Clapp.

Old Business -

Civil War Lecture Schedule

There will be a Civil War lecture hosted by Jim Clarke this Sunday, September 18th at Town Hall. The subject will be Thomas Hamilton and the USS Cincinnati.

Discussion on Fore River Bridge with Gary Peters (update on new bridge Design/Historical issues)

Mr. Gary Peters addressed the Board, updating them on where they were regarding the design of the Fore River Bridge. He said that Cohasset was voting tonight on a Resolution proposed by the South Shore Coalition in regard to their support of a smaller, lower-impact bridge - one with more historical significance. He told members that he continues to push for a 200 ft. wide channel that would allow for a more historically significant bridge.

Mr. Peters then read from his handout which he gave to the Commissioners. He noted for the original bridge the material was comprised of a lot of granite from Quincy, with the design of the bridge having an art-deco look. He said he has spent time with the Historical Preservation Officer, who is pushing it forward. He noted that the original bridge was listed in the National Historical Registry.

Mr. Peters went on to say that the state is still not fully compliant re. Section 106 MOA (Memorandum of Agreement). He said that his committee is not happy with the manner the state is proceeding and they would like to meet with the DOT officials about it, but wanted to emphasize that the Weymouth Historical Commission are signatories on it and have input. He emphasized that he was clear that the state has not complied with all the stipulations in the MOA - but added that they are compliant with some. He has requested that they produce 100 copies of the brochure re. the historical significance, etc. and that the state come back before the Commission to review their plans for the permanent replacement bridge (for both Quincy and Weymouth). He told members that he felt strongly that a lot of information was being held back from them, although at this point it was still in draft form.

Mr. Peters told members that the state is saying one thing but in reality are doing another. He said they were supposed to acknowledge the plaques that were on the original bridge and that appear to be stolen. He did not believe they were doing Weymouth justice. He was strongly suggesting that the Commission request the Mass. Dept. of Transportation and Preservation Officer come back before them and give them an update. He said that he personally has found their lack of responsiveness frustrating.

(Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived)

Mr. Peters described their design of the bridge as literally touching the gatehouse and he felt this feature deserved further consideration and discussion. Additionally he told members that the state was talking about 'kiosks' but have done this without Weymouth being at the table. In closing he again

encouraged the members to invite the state DOT to come before them so that they Commission can be updated on their plans.

Ms. Torrey wanted to point out to Mr. Peters that he was using the word 'historical' when it all actuality he should be saying 'it might be historical looking' - clarifying that it did not meet the criteria for being historical. She said she knew this from serving on the Abigail Adams Historical Committee, further explaining that the structure must be in place for a minimum of "50" years to be considered historical - when it actuality it is a reproduction.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that it was a fact that the bridge was gone, but she said you need to consider its history when moving forward.

Ms. Torrey commented that she has been at a meeting on the bridge with the state.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told her that when the federal government becomes involved it is a different thing - even to do minor work in a historical area the federal government steps in. She wanted to not that they had to demolish the original bridge, because the state let it deteriorate. She asked 'why should Weymouth and surrounding communities suffer for that?' She stated they should mitigate this.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that when they met with Ma. DOT, they agreed to keep Weymouth involved in the planning process - but this has not been the case.

Town Councilor Papp spoke next, stating that the proposed new structure would not be historical, but it was historical to the Town and they want the replacement to be something fitting and appropriate - an homage to the 1936 bridge. He told members if they (DOT) come in 'we want to give our input'.

Ms. Torrey restated that it keeps coming across from Mr. Peters that we are talking about something historical but that is not the case.

Mr. Peters replied, "we're just asking that they honor their word", adding we would like some continuity. He said he recently discovered that Watson was hired to build the bridge, commenting, "I'm still learning".

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that they had a Memorandum of Agreement re. the paving work and that includes the gatehouse. This is being done with the understanding they are waiting on a new bridge. She added "now we need to take a stance".

Mr. Clarke asked about a time line.

Mr. Peters said that currently the state Preservation Officer says that the pamphlets are in draft form, adding that he got this information through the Freedom of Information Act.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that they are dealing with the government and its bureaucracy.

Ms. Torrey told members that she lived the closest to the bridge and was happy with either design.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would like their state legislators to come before them as well - referring to Rep. Murphy, Sen. Hedlund and Rep. Mariano.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to invite Weymouth's state reps to the same meeting as the representatives from the Dept. of Transportation - or they could meet with them at the bridge - and the invitation would possibly include Brona Simon, the state's Preservation Officer.

Motion was seconded.

Discussion:

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan and Mr. Clarke also wanted to include Mayor Kay and Town Councilor Victor Papp to attend the meeting.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan felt that the north parcel was the perfect place to meet. She noted that Lovell's Grove, Pine Point and the Thomas Watson area were all very historical places in the area. She said they needed it not be an embarrassment for the Town of Weymouth, commenting when all is said and done they could at least say 'we tried'.

Mr. Peters stated that when federal funds are involved, certain criteria has to be met in order to receive the funds - adding, so they must comply.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan felt that the shipyard was a perfect example - if not using the water - it must still provide public access. She said since it is no longer being used for maritime commerce, then the Fore River Watershed Assn. and the Historical Commission can become involved. She went on to site Greenbush as another example, stating we fought and the pieces are still not in place - but they were required to comply and there were signed agreements. She wanted to point out that this came about because everyone worked together.

Mr. Clarke told members that they must document this with a letter saying this is something you promised to do - and if applicable they can refer to the Memorandum of Agreement.

Concern was voiced again for the historical plaques from the gatehouse/bridge which were either lost or stolen.

Mr. Peters referred to the 8/19/2011 letter, which delineated their Agreement. He then spoke about Rep. Mariano who said that the size of the channel has to be so big - and that they can't build the bascule bridge because it would be too heavy.

Ms. Torrey urged members to try to stay on point if the meeting takes place. She pointed out that the Portland, Maine bridge is 200' and does the job.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that they are saying it can't be done.

Ms. Lehrer interjected 'that is what they said to us'.

Mr. Peters commented, if that is the case why does Chicago have (11) of them - all over 225'. He said he would get the cover letter and the Memorandum of Understanding for the members, and would include in the text that they are not in compliance.

(this will be emailed to Ms. Lehrer)

Councilor Papp informed the Commission that he and Gary Peters would draft the letter for the Commission's input; with the purpose of referring to the Agreement and to request that meet when they get closer to the design phase.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the Greenbush Mitigation Committee, noting that at that time they had the support of Jim Clarke/Planning Director, commenting that they weren't satisfied that they did enough and based on that they hired their own Preservationist. They were able to get granite and cobblestone walls, which helped toward the designation of the Historical District. So, she asked, do we have to get someone in here too? She said that the geology of the basin goes back to the pre-Cambrian age.

Councilor Papp said they would draft the letter in the next few days, adding they need to advertise by 06/20/2016. Lastly he said that they now need to get the documents out by December.

Ms. Lehrer wanted to recap the invitees to the meeting, which included: Massachusetts Historical Commission, Dept. of Transportation, and Weymouth's state representatives.

Ms. Lehrer emphasized that they were 'not' presently out of compliance, per Planning's perspective - adding they see the project as still underway and ongoing. She noted that Brona Simon informs them that Steps 2 and 3 are not completed - and also says they have no say in the new design, but just the opportunity to review and comment on it (re. engineering choices; i. .e, bascule vs. the vertical life bridge).

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to send a letter to invite Weymouth's state representatives/senator, representatives from the Dept. of Transportation and representatives from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to a meeting at Town Hall in the near future to discuss the Fore River Bridge rehab project.

Mr. Ted Clarke seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 11th, 2011.

Adjournment

Mr. Clarke moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Ms. Torrey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED



Ed Walker, Chair

11/15/2011

Date

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary