

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 6TH, 2007 MEETING

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Tom Curtis, Mary Dorey, Steve Puleo, Richard Pattison, and Jodi Purdy-Quinlan

ALSO PRESENT: James Clarke, Director of Housing and Community Development
Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning and Community Development

Chairman T. Clarke called the February 6th, 2007 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes - January 2007

Mr. T. Clarke requested that the minutes for 11/06 and 1/07 be resent to the Commission members for action at the next meeting.

Sea Street Historic District

The consultant has completed her work and is sending the nomination to the Mass. Historical Commission.

Associate Member Provision

Mr. J. Clarke stated that this item is still under review.

Mass. Historical Commission - Survey Grant application

Ms. Lehrer reported that the town was not successful in obtaining a grant. We were not selected to submit a full application. Staff will set up a meeting with MHC to discuss why our application was not successful.

Community Preservation Committee

Mr. J. Clarke noted that a public hearing by the CPC will be held on February 8 to solicit funding proposals. Mr. Pattison wants to have the Cemetery Commission present their proposal to the Historical Commission.

Commission members discussed how and when they would be required to comment on historic preservation projects proposed for funding by the CPC. Mr. J. Clarke stated that the CPC would be required to solicit the Historical Commission's input for those properties not already recognized by the National Register, state register or other local inventory.

Other - Historic House Signs

Member discussed the manner in which to proceed with the introduction of historic signs for the Town.

Mr. Curtis asked how they would determine if a house is 'plaque worthy', questioning who would research its historic value.

Mr. Pattison agreed with Ms. Dorey that the plaque be created by Weymouth Voch Tech and constructed of wood.

It was recommended that those who qualify be offered two designs to select from.

Mr. Pattison asked if Weymouth had a Graphic Arts Department.

With regard to the two recommended designs - it was suggested the signs be differentiated by the wording; i. e., one would denote the *family surname with the word House* - the other sign would say "Built in (*Circa Date*)".

Mr. Pattison told members that he has the history of Weymouth homes constructed from the 1700's.

Ms. Dorey agreed that they should offer the following two options:

- 1.) the *year* the house was built - and it would also include '*Weymouth Historical Commission*'
- 2.) or - This is the '*Mary Dorey*' House

Mr. T. Clarke asked if Ms. Dorey could bring back samples for the members to see.

Mr. Curtis asked about the cost of the signs and Ms. Dorey recommended they use scrap wood that the school has on hand so that there would be no cost.

Mr. Curtis suggested they use redwood- and that the Commission pay for it.

It was suggested the Commission send Lowe's in North Weymouth a letter asking if they would donate the wood.

At this point Ms. Dorey showed members 2 sample 'oval' shaped signs for their consideration (drafted on 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 paper).

Members liked them. It was noted that the students would create the signs by hand.

It was agreed that one of the signs offered would have 'circa/year'.

It was also suggested that the Town Seal be included.

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that she has a Weymouth coin that was created for the 350th anniversary that might be utilized for the sign. After some discussion members felt that the words the "*Weymouth Historical Commission*" should be on the sign and would be the simplest format to go with.

Ms. Dorey suggested the size of the sign be 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " X 11"

Mr. Pattison moved to approve the certificate entitled "Weymouth Historical Commission - Certificate of Receipt - Historic Home Marker" as well as the Process proposed for Applying for the Historic Marker.

Mr. J. Clarke interjected that he would like to refine the document before members vote on it, adding that he would also like to draft the letter to the merchants/Lowe's requesting a donation. Additionally he would like Chairman Clarke and himself to meet with Mayor Madden on finalizing the process and wording. He quickly added that he didn't see a problem with the signs. He informed members that any excess monies in the fund could be rolled over. Lastly, he recommended that Ms. Dorey speak with Joe at Weymouth Voch Tech about obtaining a sample for the members to see before approving them.

Ms. Dorey agreed.

After a brief discussion it was recommended that the sample sign could be for Mayor Madden's house - as it now has historical value, being the home of the first Mayor of the Town of Weymouth.

Unfinished Business - Weymouth Landing

Chairman Clarke referred to their grant, asking members if they should take \$25,000 and designate it for Weymouth Landing or if not, he asked other suggestions.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she felt Weymouth Landing was the most significant of the Town's historic sites, adding she felt they had a good chance of obtaining additional funds for the Heights.

Mr. Pattison noted that that Weymouth Landing designation should include "l of the hill" behind Sacred Heart Church.

Chairman Clarke said at this point he just wanted to vote on where the money would be spent - Weymouth Landing or if not the Landing, what other site.

Chairman Clarke reminded members that they previously discussed CPC money to go along with it.

Mr. Pattison commented that he thought Mr. J. Clarke was going to look into Sea Street too, with Mr. J. Clarke responding that he didn't think 25K was enough, adding he felt the costs would be more like \$35,000 to \$40,000.

In referring to the Landing, Mr. J. Clarke told members that he would like to get in touch with Massachusetts Historical Society to get their thoughts and suggestions, but in the meantime he felt the members could be moving forward with Step One, as they did with Sea Street. He commented that the members should begin the process by doing an inventory and Chairman Clarke supported this suggestion.

43 Bicknell Street

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan addressed the status of 43 Bicknell and their last meeting when the members asked her to put together a one-page synopsis on its historical value. She then referred back to their November 11th meeting under 'Unfinished Business' where she quoted "*Ms. Purdy-Quinlan reported that she is working on the Commission's proposal for the CPC, noting she believed there was a November 30th deadline. She went on to say that at the present time she has a very busy schedule, but confirmed that after the Thanksgiving holiday she would put the report together.*" She noted that at that time the members did not question her intent. She added that she is also looking for the minutes of their September meeting as well as the CPC Minutes to see if there is any further reference to Bicknell Street and any discussion/action that was taken.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that she has additional information with regard to the historical validity of 43 Bicknell. She said that when she and Ms. Evans attended the CPC meeting, they left that night thinking they had the backing of the CPC. As part of their presentation, they distributed a flyer and 132 signatures they collected at the neighborhood cleanup and at Weymouth Day. The petition summarily stated in part "We the undersigned support the preservation of 43 Bicknell Street, etc." She felt that the proposal also covered the three components that are part of the CPA charge; Open Space, Historical Value, Recreation and possibly Affordable Housing. She reiterated that the minutes that would document what took place at the September meeting (when she made her presentation) have not been made available to her.

Mr. J. Clarke took a moment to clarify that the minutes are not being withheld, but that the recording secretary has not transcribed/submitted them as yet.

Mr. Curtis said he would check on the CPC minutes.

Chairman Clarke stated that he still needed to understand the Commission was in support of the application. He further stated that the reason there are meeting minutes is to document action that takes place by the members present. He pointed out that things could be said and not corrected. He then asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan to explain what she proposed to do with '43 Bicknell', pointing out that originally she stated it would be a museum.

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan distributed a 9-page handout entitled 'Weymouth Community Preservation Committee's Application Submission Sheet', which included the application form and a 7 page narrative.

Members took some time to read the submission form, drafted by Ms. Purdy-Quinlan.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan continued to present additional information validating the history of the site, which included:

- pictures showing different views of the house/property
- a variety of newspaper clippings
- an excerpt from Weymouth's 350th Anniversary Booklet, Haroldine
- a 1994 Univ. of Mass. Article, photos of the skull of an Indian woman/child found in 1928 when they excavated for the Bicknell School
- a 1964 map/story re. the first Weymouth colony
- a copy of the William Woods map of 1634
- articles and a variety of documents re. Charles Adams, Jr. and his relationship to the property

Mr. Puleo asked if she envisioned \$600,000 being adequate for the purchase/refurbishment of the house.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan responded that the \$600,000 figure was just a number. She referred back to the time when the Commission negotiated with Ken Ryder/Developer for property - pointing out that the original figure was \$695,000, with the final number being reduced to \$495,000. She said that at this point \$600,000 is the asking price. She acknowledged that she was aware that the CPC did not want a figure larger than \$600,000. She wanted to note that this process is all new to her and she didn't know how things would move forward. She further stated that she and the homeowner are open to what is fair and reasonable. Lastly, she told members that she wanted to be the person to present the purchase of 43 Bicknell, doing so as the Vice-Chairman of the Weymouth Historical Commission.

Mr. Puleo asked if that meant she wanted the backing of the WHC and she replied 'yes'.

Mr. Pattison wanted to make a motion to clarify the action that would be taken.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan emphasized that she saw this as 'our' project and that the members should embrace it and hope it passes as she does. Next she referred to her first draft and said she was open to suggestions. She viewed the site as a piece of history that has been ignored, adding that what they now have is an opportunity that they should act upon. Further she spoke of her personal feelings and her history with the Commission adding that she can envision the Commission and town officials present at the opening of the property. She also wanted to point out that Weymouth is the oldest town in Mass. Bay

Colony and contains the oldest burial ground where the first settlers died and were buried in the first six months.

Mr. Pattison moved to endorse the project at 43 Bicknell and that Jim Clarke represent the Commission and present it on their behalf to the Town of Weymouth.

Mr. Pattison further stated that he personally thought they should endorse funding beyond the \$600,000, including a small amount above and beyond the \$600,000 for maintenance and management. He also wanted to note that the property needs to be cleaned up. He said that if it eventually becomes a museum, they could charge an admittance fee. He felt that another \$25,000-\$50,000 a year in funding would do it for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Ms. Dorey seconded Mr. Pattison's motion.

Mr. Puleo asked if they could include in the motion that the building be used as some type of historical museum.

Mr. Pattison asked, "doesn't the back tie into Wessagusset?" - if so, its use could be tied into 'recreational' use also.

Mr. Puleo asked if it was appropriate to include in the motion that it be used as a museum, if so he would like this to be included as an amendment to Mr. Pattison's motion.

Mr. Pattison agreed with the amendment.

Mr. Curtis commented from an operational standpoint he was concerned with management and maintenance. He felt politically it was the wrong way to go. He then asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan if she was suggesting the other three areas of the Act not receive any of the unspecified funds. He said the CPC was receiving \$500,000 a year ('06) and so far have \$1.5 million (as of '07), with additional funding coming for '08. He noted that they are committed to expend 5% for administrative expenses and to set aside an additional 10% mandated for the three categories. He stated "you're suggesting we deny any funds for the other three areas".

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied that 43 Bicknell could also be viewed to come under Open Space and Recreation.

Mr. Curtis agreed, but added then Steve Ford/Recreation would view it as getting nothing and that the person representing Open Space would see it the same way - as well as Jim Cunningham, WHA representing Affordable Housing who would also get "\$0". He commented that there is a difference between 'need and greed'.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan spoke to Mr. Curtis and stated 'if you as our representative suggest the best way to present it is just as a "Historical Presentation" I don't see a problem with it'.

Mr. Pattison commented that he saw Open Space and Recreation involved with the application for 43 Bicknell.

Chairman T. Clarke asked if there was any way to do it for less and Ms. Purdy-Quinlan responded 'no'.

Mr. Curtis informed members if they chose to present the application as a 30-year mortgage, he wanted to caution them because the future of matching funds was not guaranteed every year. He personally recommended they go with less, based on historical value only, and to pursue the source of funding by going for as many years as possible. He wanted to affirm that the total amount of funding be clearly stated in the application, including anticipated income and expenses. He acknowledged that it would be an arduous task.

Mr. Pattison noted that the application says: '07 and/or '08.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied that nothing is written in stone and that the purchase date of FY07 is flexible. She said that possibly the Town would need to come up with a Purchase & Sale Agreement that satisfies the mortgage company.

Mr. Curtis asked if the property had been appraised.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told him that the owners were refinancing, so she expected the property had been appraised - but it was noted that Town requires three appraisals. She told members that she is aware of the property owners' expenses and wanted to point out there was some flexibility there, but pointed out the owners would like to walk away with something.

With regard to maintenance of the property, Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that she has served on the Abigail Adams Historical Society and during that time learned that when you have a non-profit organization you encumber bills and the committee has responsibility to pay for these expenses. Further, she noted that there were also people associated with the Norfolk County Trial Court that perform work/maintenance at no charge to the community - emphasizing again "I'm flexible".

Chairman T. Clarke referred to the use of the building, commenting they might be asked about the museum aspect, asking 'do you have any connection with the Society for Museums?' He said that he sees it as 'our' museum and we would need to attract donations. He noted that he himself has some historical items. He thought it would be a good idea to fill the museum with antiques and collectibles and he was sure there were others who were willing to do the same.

Mr. Curtis asked, "how will the museum be sustained?" "Where will the funding come from?"

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied 'from community donations, dues'. She noted that Abigail Adams Society raised money through a variety of ways; such as, bake sales and plant sales - earning as much as \$3,000.00.

Mr. Curtis told members that Jim Wilson, the Town's CFO, would be going over the application with a fine toothcomb and Mayor Madden would be asking his opinion - adding, he didn't think the application would pass as it is now. He stated that it would need a lot more financial detail. He told Ms. Purdy-Quinlan that he felt an abridged version of the 7-page narrative would be a much better document to submit. One that was strictly factual and focused just on the history of the property, the house and the land and the memorial garden - omitting all her personal references, adding that nothing personal should be in there.

Mr. Puleo asked how would they feel about a mortgage; for example, \$10,000 a year, with the balance made up by a foundation - possibly \$50,000-\$100,000 as a down payment, with a maintenance/operational fund.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said the cost would probably be around \$500,000 with the possibility of funding \$100,000 each year.

Mr. Clarke said members need to vote on the merits of the proposal and the associated cost, at that point the CPC could discuss the financing. He recommended they leave it as presented, clarifying that he didn't mean it would be the final number.

Ms. Dorey emphasized that she felt it was most important they get the application to the CPC as soon as possible.

Mr. Pattison moved that the WHC endorse the proposal for 43 Bicknell Street with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan as Vice-Chairman, presenting the application to the Community Preservation Committee - with the strong recommendation 43 Bicknell be turned into a Historical Museum.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Additional Reports - Cemetery Commission Proposal

Other Business

Mr. Pattison referred to the August minutes, questioning the information to go on the plaques. It was agreed that he and Mr. Clarke would work on this.

Chester Kevitt Award

When asked about an update on the Chester Kevitt Award, Mr. Pattison said he needed to do some more checking and he would report back at the next meeting.

New Business - Weymouth Scholarship Fund Recipient

Mr. Pattison referred to a recent newspaper article citing a Weymouth scholarship recipient, Alma McDermott, who was pursuing a career as an archival librarian. He asked if the Commission could contact her about doing work for them and Chairman T. Clarke replied 'sounds good'.

Jody Lehrer offered to contact her.

Boston Globe Article

Mr. Pattison said he was not too happy with a recent Boston Globe article with regard to the Tufts Library and the canoe that is stored there. He wanted it to be known that the canoe is the property of the Weymouth Historical Commission and has historical value.

Other Business - MLC Annual Preservation Award

Mr. Clarke informed members that they did not win the MLC Annual Preservation Award they were seeking, but it is up again for 2007 and he suggested they reapply and include the new house video Chairman T. Clarke has created.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to have Mr. J. Clarke submit the proper documentation along with the house video created by Ted Clarke for this year's consideration re. the MLC Annual Preservation Award.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Adjournment

Mr. Pattison moved to adjourn at 8:50 PM.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Respectfully submitted,
Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary

Ted Clarke, Chairman

Date