

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
February 12th, 2008 Meeting
Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Richard Pattison, Tom Curtis, Ed Walker, Steve Puleo and Jody Purdy-Quinlan

ABSENT: Mary Dorey

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

Chairman Clarke called the February 12, 2008 meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Curtis moved to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2008 meeting as submitted.

Mr. Puleo seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

TOWN LIAISON

Update on the Survey and Planning Grant from Massachusetts Historical Commission

Ms. Lehrer reported that she heard from the Mass. Historical Commission in regard to the Letter of Intent for the 2008 Planning Cycle. The letter informed the WHC that it will not be invited to submit a full application for the Wessagusset Memorial Garden, as only Certified Local Governments are being invited (e.g., ones with a local historical district). This decision to restrict full invites was due to budgetary constraints.

Mr. Walker commented that he thought Weymouth did have a 'Local Historical District' and Ms. Lehrer confirmed that it did not, but had a 'National Historic District'.

Ms. Lehrer further stated that the MHC said they are limiting invitations to certified local government applications, again reiterating those with Local Historic Districts.

First Church Request

Next Ms. Lehrer reported that she was contacted by the Board of Trustees of the First Church requesting that they be notified when there is anything on the agenda regarding the MeetingHouse.

Members agreed to do so.

Update on Historical House Plaques

Ms. Lehrer then updated members on Weymouth's historical house plaques.

Ms. Lehrer referred to a chart she had prepared for the members listing each application she had received for plaque approval and the status of each, adding that new applications have begun to trickle in (members were given a copy of the chart).

The chart contained a number of detailed categories:

- Address of Historical House
- Date constructed
- Date application was submitted to WHC
- Date application as approved
- Historical Name House/Building
- Listed on Demolition Delay List
- Name of Owner of House/Building
- Date Plaque Awarded

Additionally she brought along some agreements to be signed for previously approved plaques:

- 1) 11 Lorraine Street
- 2) 104 Front Street

At this point she told members about a new application for:

- 1) 96 Hollis Street

Ms. Lehrer added that a second new application had been received and she had copied both for the members' consideration.

(Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived)

Ms. Lehrer wanted to point out that out of the six homes listed on the chart, all have been approved by the Commission except the new one: 96 Hollis Street.

Ms. Lehrer spoke further about the Hollis Street application, submitted by Tiffany Riley and Charles Helen. She noted that the house was built in 1898 and is of traditional turn of the century architecture. She noted that the original owner of this house, Frederick Hollis (married to Jennie Hollis) was a shoemaker and son of Isaac and Louisa Hollis - also of Weymouth

It was pointed out that the house met the criteria for approval of a plaque based on the age of the dwelling.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to approve a house plaque for 96 Hollis Street.

Mr. Clarke seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Pattison said he could not vote for approval of the application at this time, as he would like additional time to do some research and verify its history.

Me. Walker noted that the age had been verified, but questioned where the background information had been obtained.

Ms. Lehrer replied that it was from the Town website.

Mr. Pattison moved to amend Ms. Purdy-Quinlan's motion to have the request taken under advisement.

Motion seconded.

Discussion: When asked how the members would be able to get additional information, Mr. Walker volunteered to do the research.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan noted that the house was listed in the 1880 census, which meant it met the age criteria which was one of the (3) criteria drawn up by the Commission - and needed in order to be awarded a historical house plaque.

Chairman Clarke recapped the amended motion that called for tabling action of 96 Hollis Street until the next meeting - to allow time for additional research.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED. The vote was 5-1, Chairman Clarke opposed.

CPC Update - 43 Bicknell Rd.

Mr. Curtis stated that the CPC had a meeting last Thursday evening (2/7/08) and at that time they reviewed their budget. Additionally, last evening (2/11/08) the CPC requests were on the Town Council agenda, but it came to light that 43 Bicknell Road had been omitted in error. When this oversight came to the attention of Jim Wilson/CFO he assured those present it would be on the next Town Council agenda.

Re. 43 Bicknell Street - Mr. Curtis went on to report that the contract for the preliminary architectural study has been approved by Mayor Kay. Further, in speaking with Jim Wilson, he informed him that he saw no reason that approval of this (expenditure, which would validate the authenticity of 43 Bicknell being a historical site,) wouldn't pass.

Mr. Curtis went on to say that he would appreciate members making an effort to attend the next Town Council meeting (2/19) to support the request for funding for 43 Bicknell. He quickly added if the Commission preferred he would address the matter with Town Council regarding approval of this funding request on their behalf.

Status on the Preservation of the Canoe

Chairman Clarke reported that he gave the info on the canoe to Jim Clarke, with Mr. Walker adding it would next go before Mayor Sue Kay for her approval then onto the Town Council for their approval. It was noted that the CPC must approve the proposal first.

Chairman Clarke asked Ms. Lehrer to check with Jim on the status.

Mr. Curtis next reported that the CPC approved Whitman's Pond, pointing out that it had been on the former Mayor's desk for 165 days without any action being taken. He went on to say that the CPC was handed the application for funding re. preserving the canoe on Thursday night (2/7/08). It was clarified that the cost was under \$20,000 - and would be a one-time only charge.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that she had sent an email to the Town Councilors requesting their support re. 43 Bicknell Street. She also wanted to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Lehrer for her work on the grant application.

Wessagusset Marker

It was noted that Mr. Paul Sanders dedicated the stone marker located at Wessagusset in honor of his ancestors; i. e., this areas second governor. At this point they need to find a necessary piece of granite left over from the original railroad (bed/walls).

It as noted that ten (10) pieces of stone were moved successfully by the DPW - and that Mr. Sanders has agreed to pay the cost of \$5,000 to engrave his ancestors' history on the stone markers.

New Business**Historical Tour - Red Hat Society**

Chairman Clarke told members that he received a call from Mayor Kay yesterday. She told him that the "Red Hat Society (a women's retiree organization) had requested a historical tour of the town and she was looking for a person who was knowledgeable on the history of Weymouth to host the tour, which is scheduled to take place on Friday, April 25th at 1 PM

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan volunteered to give the historical tour of the town to the Red Hat Society.

Memorial Marker Request for Laurence Edward MacFawn at corner of Pleasant Street/Mutton Lane

Mr. Pattison told members that he received a telephone call yesterday (2/12/08) from Bill Connell, past state representative of Weymouth. Mr. Connell requested Mr. Pattison and the Historical Commission's support with the creation of a marker for Laurence Edward MacFawn. Mr. MacFawn was a Naval Aviator from Weymouth and a recipient of the Distinguished Flying cross (with 3*) - a victim of 'friendly fire'. He was also a Weymouth athlete serving as pitcher and football tackle for Weymouth High School. Mr. Connell was requesting that a marker, constructed by DPW, be placed at the present stone's location and that they clean up the area. Further that they relocate the present marker placing it up above in the rear of the present location - because the marker there now is not easily visible. He asked that the Commission send a letter to the Mayor and the DPW making this request.

Discussion:

Mr. Curtis thought it best to bring the issue before the Town Memorial Committee first, with Mr. Pattison clarifying that the Memorial Committee had already approved the stone marker sometime ago and that this was more or less maintenance issue.

It was agreed that a letter would be drafted for this purpose and sent to Mayor Kay, Bob O'Connor/DPW Director and past Rep. Bill Connell - with a copy to the Memorial Committee.

Old South Union Church

Mr. Pattison moved to approve the request by Mary Stadalnick, Architectural Historian/ EBI Consulting (the Town's consulting firm) to have Verizon place an antenna in Old South Union Church.

Seconded.

Discussion:

Mr. Walker wanted to make sure that the antenna didn't interfere with the historical clock on the church, adding it was the only original part of the church that remained.

Mr. Pattison accepted this amendment.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Other Business

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to research she conducted on Wessagusset, adding that a couple of years back she discovered a website on Genealogy, which contained information on her father-in-laws family; i. e., Thomas & Jane Walford - who arrived in Weymouth in 1623. From there she 'googled' the names and found out that they were members of the Robert Gorges Company founded in 1620. She also found a book entitled "The Devil of Great Island" which mentioned them and she also got to meet the author who was a professor of History at Salem State College. She went on to describe the story to the members, which involved witchcraft.

In reading about them and that time in colonial history, she discovered that there have been a number of disputes about the land over the years. She also found a related article, which involved the Walford's re. the History of New Castle, NH and included reference to Cotton Mather. In summary she said that the story included reference to witch hunts in the area including Salem that took place during the colonial time period.

Update on PAL and Tim Orwig

Ms. Lehrer told members that both consulting firms, PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) who has the contract for Weymouth Landing/Front Street and Timothy Orwig from Walpole who has the contract for Meeting House Historic District - have signed their contracts and are now awaiting Town signatures (Mayor Kay, Jim Wilson and Town Solicitor Lane) that will finalize the contracts and allow them to begin work. Additionally, she wanted members to know MHC has reviewed the language in the contracts and found that all was in order. After speaking with both principals, they have conveyed that they are looking forward to starting the job.

Hollis Street Plaque

Ms. Lehrer reminded members that the person who would be creating the house plaques would have to have a minimum of three (3) house signs in order to meet the minimum work order required by Michael McCarthy/Yankee Woodcarvers. Based on that she said she would need the members to approve 96 Hollis Street for him (which would total 3) to begin work on all three historical house sign plaques.

Members agreed to authorize the 'go ahead' for the plaques prior to the next meeting, once the history and/or age is verified by Mr. Pattison/Mr. Walker. At that point they would contact Ms. Lehrer requesting that she give the go ahead for the three plaques. It is hoped that Mr. Walker/Mr. Pattison's approvals will be received by next week.

Clapp Memorial Update

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that the Cecil Group was hired for the Clapp Memorial project. During the recent hearing, many residents stood and commented. She also spoke at the meeting giving the history of the site. All comments are expected to be incorporated.

Mr. Walker asked that the interior of the building be photographed before construction starts. Chairman Clarke noted that he had asked for this at a prior public meeting so that historical integrity could be preserved.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that many neighbors were disappointed to see it go.

It was noted that the site will be converted into 48 condominiums.

Ms. Lehrer interjected that the total number may be smaller as they are trying to get the number reduced.

Adjournment

Mr. Curtis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 PM.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ted Clarke, Chairman, WHC

Date

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary