

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
April 1st, 2008 Meeting
Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Richard Pattison, Tom Curtis, Ed Walker, Steve Puleo and Mary Dorey

ABSENT: Jodi Purdy-Quinlan

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning and
Community Development
Timothy Orwig from Walpole
Jenny Field from PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) from Pawtucket, RI

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2008 meeting as amended.

Motion seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED (Ms. Dorey abstained)

Town Liaison

At this point in the meeting Ms. Lehrer took a moment to introduce representatives of the two firms who won the bids re. the RFP's for the nomination of two historic districts in the Town of Weymouth for inclusion in the National Historic Register; i. e., Meetinghouse Historic District and Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District. They were (1) Timothy Orwig from Walpole - who won the bid on Meetinghouse Historic District and (2) Jenny Field from PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) from Pawtucket, RI - representing the firm who won the bid for the Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District

Historical Plaque Update

Ms. Lehrer informed members that they now have four approved historical plaques (which meet the minimal order) ready to be constructed. She will pass this information on to Michael McCarthy the person contracted to create the plaques.

Preserve America Update

Next Ms. Lehrer informed members that she has begun to draft the components needed to have Weymouth designated as a "Preserve America Community", which could enable Weymouth to obtain federal funding. Phase I, the drafted letter for application has been passed onto Mayor Kay for her review/approval. Presently she has begun to draft the second component demonstrating that Weymouth meets the (5) required criteria in 3 categories (each one to be written in 250 words or less). She then told the members if they have any additional information that might assist her in this task to please feel free to pass it on.

Tomorrow she plans to meet with Hope Patterson and they will speak about educating children on the historical aspects of the Town; i. e., Discovering Heritage through Historic Places (part of the Category 1 requirement). She added that Ms. Patterson has told her she would also like to address the Commission.

Ms. Lehrer went on to speak to the different aspects that encompass obtaining the federal funds; i. e., Protecting Historic Resources, This includes the need to address any historic preservation review ordinance and a volunteer or professional staff to implement it, where she must explain its purpose and why it is significant. Another requirement calls for Promoting Historic Assets - she felt the Chester Kevitt Award would qualify.

Mr. Pattison interjected that he was the person who created that award and told Ms. Lehrer that she should have the information on the award/Chester Kevitt in the files.

Chairman Clarke added that he also had some information on that particular subject, adding there was an article he had written for the Weymouth News about the Award, etc. that might help.

Mr. Pattison said he could supply the date the award was created and specifically why it was named after Chester Kevitt.

Ms. Lehrer told members that Jim Clarke gave her a letter for the Chairman which addressed the preservation of the bronze plaque on the Rt. 18 Bridge. She said that Mass. Highway has considered this request and agreed to incorporate it into the design. At this point she outlined the instructions that were passed on to them as well as the requested format which will be followed.

Ms. Lehrer also referred to another letter from Jim Clarke to Mr. Strand in regard to 660 Middle Street and the 'demolition delay' - requesting permission to end the process. She told members that she has received some calls about the property.

It was noted there would be a Town Council meeting on Wednesday, April 2nd and that Ms. Lehrer and Bob Luongo would be attending for the purpose of addressing the RFP for 43 Bicknell Street.

Fogg Library Update

Ms. Lehrer reported that she was informed by Jim Clarke that a 'select' removal of stone has taken place with this stone to be utilized as samples - before the project goes forward.

Ed Walker informed members that Jim Clarke has told him that he would like to meet with him along with Jody Lehrer about preservation of the canoe. Monday, April 8th was the suggested date of the meeting.

Mr. Pattison asked if there was an estimate of the cost and Mr. Curtis responded \$20,000. He asked if that would include additional work but he did not know. It was clarified that the extra costs are not known as yet.

Mr. Pattison said he would like to be kept informed about any additional costs and the explanation for it.

Chairman Clarke said that the Town Council briefly spoke about it, but they didn't have a figure either.

Guests

Jenny Field, representing PAL, spoke next. Ms. Field told members that she was a historical architect and was excited to be working with Weymouth again, adding that her company (PAL) did a lot of Weymouth work for Greenbush. She further stated that Virginia Adams would be assisting with this project (as he did this for Greenbush).

Ms. Field further stated that presently they are about half done with the research. She planned on visiting the local libraries again for additional research. She explained that the project has three parts; i. e., (1) field (2) research (3) writing the nomination. She expected to have the completed draft by the end of May, then she would pass the draft onto the Commission. She said she might have some questions regarding the boundary, adding if she has any questions she can't resolve, she will send them onto Jody for her help/assistance.

Chairman Clarke offered his help.

Mr. Curtis asked if all contact regarding this matter should go through Jody Lehrer and the response was 'yes'. Once Ms. Lehrer receives the info she will pass it onto the Commission members.

Mr. Pattison asked about a timeline and Ms. Field said she expected it to be complete by the end of May and expected they would have everything in time for the Commission's June meeting scheduled for June 12, 2008.

Ms. Field said she will try to complete the draft by the 2nd/3rd week of May.

Ms. Lehrer said if necessary the Commission might consider calling a special meeting.

Chairman Clarke wanted to point out that they would also need to hold a public hearing.

Ms. Lehrer went on to inform members that she has been in close contact with Phil Bergin of the Mass. Historical Society for his assistance and guidance.

Chairman Clarke commented that after they hear Mr. Orwig's presentation, they might want to consider a joint public meeting for both districts.

Mr. Tim Orwig spoke next. He told the Board he was a PhD. Student at Boston University and has done a lot of consulting. He commented that it has been very exciting for him to research the Meeting House District and its interior buildings. He said that he also spoke with Phil Bergen/MHC. Additionally, he has visited Tufts Library and has assessor's materials.

At this point Mr. Orwig distributed a handout entitled "Meeting House Historic District" - which listed the properties in that area and included such categories as: the atlas location, address, year built, owner and other names/notes. He told members he felt that some things around the edges could be added, and also suggested cutting one building - 24 East Street, built in 1953 (next to the original parsonage).

Members questioned the location and Mr. Orwig said it was at the corner of East and Rinaldo Sts. He said some of the property was on the north edge of the burial ground at the corner of Beale/Norton, adding it might have been included as part of the Weymouth Historical Depot.

Mr. Orwig asked about information on Bicknell House.

Mr. Pattison referred to the LaBlanc property (on the list).

Mr. Orwig asked if he could give him some background on it.

Mr. Pattison referred him to the Greenbush papers, which Ms. Lehrer said could be found in the Planning Department's files.

Mr. Pattison said he was concerned about documentation and referred to the house on Abigail Adams Circle. He pointed out that the houses here were the first houses built for the WWII veterans.

Mr. Orwig felt additional research was needed, adding he was not sure of the time cycle - asking, was it post WWII?

Mr. Pattison explained that the Mass. Historical Society had spoken to him about their historical value, because those particular homes are considered to be the first "2-story" development built for the Veterans of WWII.

Chairman Clarke said they could possibly bring them in as a side light.

Mr. Pattison described the location as being next to the church, where the condos now sit, adding it was a school with historical value. He added that John Whitman/1635 owned all that land at one time and asked that this locus be given serious consideration.

Next Chairman Clarke pointed out the Stennis house - informing Mr. Orwig that this was a home where there was a double-murder.

Mr. Pattison explained that it was owned by the McCulloch family. He also felt the Stennis house should be included, adding it located on Tick Tock Lane.

Chairman Clarke then referred to another home located between North and Church Streets, which was the home of Dr. Cotton Tufts.

Mr. Walker stated that there used to be a farm there, when the railroad was first built; adding that the contractors for the railroad used his stone.

Mr. Pattison suggested Mr. Orwig contact the Weymouth Historical Society and speak with Barbara Johnson who he expected would be able to supply additional information.

Next Mr. Orwig spoke to members about Peggy Haslet's diary, which included an article on Cotton Tufts.

Mr. Walker noted that the railroad was built in the 1840's.

Mr. Pattison pointed out that two addresses were missing from Mr. Orwig's list; i. e., two old houses on Eden/Vernon Streets. He referred him to the Greenbush papers as he felt this information would be there.

Mr. Orwig asked the members to contact him with any future questions and gave his email address: ttorwig@oal.com.

CPC Update

Mr. Curtis wanted to take a moment to thank the members for their support re. 43 Bicknell Street. He pointed out that although the proposal was voted down 5-0 at the original hearing, with the input from the membership and the support of Mayor Kay - the final Town Council vote was in favor 7-4. He felt Mayor Kay's endorsement had a lot to do with it, in addition to the valuable contributions made by Chairman Ted Clarke and member Steve Puleo. He reported that at this point Town Council has approved a minimum of \$10,000 for Bicknell Street research. He did want to caution the membership though as he said he could see a 'storm on the horizon' re. obtaining the funding for furthering the project. He emphasized that approval of further funding would be an uphill battle. He felt that Steve's remarks hit the nail on the head. He further told members there was a meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning (4/2) with Jody Lehrer for the purpose of setting up a plan and to draft (the verbalization) the contract for the RFP.

Mr. Curtis went on to say that he has spoken several times with Ed Bell and found him very helpful.

Ms. Lehrer cautioned members that the original amount of money in the past re. the contract for Abigail Adams didn't receive much interest either.

Chairman Clarke replied that he didn't foresee that as a problem this time around.

Mr. Puleo felt that based on the discussion/meeting with the Town Council, they should go for a smaller amount.

Mr. Curtis interjected that he wanted to see the firm awarded the contract to have good references too.

Mr. Pattison moved to officially thank Chairman Ted Clarke, Steve Puleo and Tom Curtis for their hard work in obtaining Town Council's approval re. 43 Bicknell Road - and to acknowledge the support of Mayor Sue Kay.

Mr. Walker seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Canoe Update

Mr. Walker told members he was still meeting on obtaining info re. the preservation of the canoe, adding he has one more meeting with Phil Smith and Jim Clarke. He said he was nailing everything down and getting the application made out. He used the figure of \$20,000 which was a number he just 'threw out there', but felt the final number might be closer to \$10,000. He saw it all coming to a head very soon.

Unfinished Business - Chester Kevitt Award

Mr. Pattison reported that in the beginning he saw an opportunity for the Commission to go out each year with the name of a nominee for the Chester Kevitt Award - but at this point he didn't foresee one for 2008.

In further discussion he spoke about Kenneth Ryder being a potential candidate, adding he does stuff for the Town including historical preservation. He went on to say that Mr. Ryder had spent \$12,000 already on Sea Street, but added we still might want to wait another year before putting forth an official nominee.

During discussion it was noted that once a person is a member of the Commission that cannot be nominated for a period of 5 years. This discussion came about when the name of a past member Pepe was brought into this discussion.

Re. Mr. Ryder as a nominee, some members felt that some of the work done by Mr. Ryder was done as part of a deal he had at the time re. development projects with the Town.

Mr. Pattison said they could discuss a nominee again in the Fall.

Ms. Dorey moved to reduce the eligibility waiting period for past members of the Commission from five years to one year.

Mr. Pattison seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

New Business - Fire Dept. Video

Mr. Pattison referred to material written by Ted Clarke for the Fire Dept. video - and the email re. "Going Coastal Boston." He wanted to thank Mr. Clarke for all his hard work and for an excellent product.

Mr. Pattison moved to send a 'thank you' letter from the Weymouth Historical Commission to Michael Kennedy, who produced the video.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Mr. Pattison noted that there were only five (5) copies of the video created by WETC, adding he would be making (50) copies which he planned to make available at a minimal cost of \$10.00 each, adding that he has already received requests from a number of firefighters. He further stated that any profits he makes (less his cost of between \$2,000-\$3,000) would be donated for Weymouth historical purposes - or to Jim Clarke. He also suggested that the Weymouth Historical Society might chose to sell the video.

Ms. Lehrer spoke to Mr. Pattison referring back to the nomination of the Chester Kevitt Award - stating that she realized he was thinking of waiting until next year and that she appreciated his accolades for Ken Ryder, which she commented were well-deserved. She also wanted to point out that he has come forward with a request to demolish the property at 1529 Commercial Street (located next to CVS), which is on the 'demolition delay' list as it was built in the 1700's. She wanted members to know that Mr. Ryder would be coming before them for this permit, adding she wanted to give the members a 'heads up'.

Mr. Pattison said he understood Mr. Ryder's problem in this instance, adding he felt the Commission should document/photo the Commercial Street site before any demolition takes place. He also wanted to point out that aside from this situation, Mr. Ryder has also done a lot of good work for the Town, adding he has donated a lot of land.

Mr. Curtis interjected that Mr. Ryder was right in part about the donation, but quickly added that he also received \$300,000 for the land.

Chairman Clarke commented that many have done good things for the Town, but for a variety of reasons' including it was good business to make certain overtures - instead of doing it simply for the good of the Town.

In closing discussion on this subject, Mr. Pattison said 'we can think about it'.

Announcements/Adjournment

Chairman Clarke informed members that the Town's website has just received an award entitled "Mass. Common Cause" - and qualified for Sunshine Week. He has written something about it in his upcoming column for the Weymouth News. The column also recognizes the helpfulness of WETC.

Next Meeting - May

Members agreed to change the May meeting date from the 2nd Tuesday to the first Tuesday - May 6th, due to scheduling conflicts.

A motion was made to formally schedule the May meeting for Tuesday, May 6th, 2008.

Mr. Curtis seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Adjournment

Mr. Curtis moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ted Clarke, Chairman, WHC

Date

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary