

**WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**May 6, 2008 Meeting**  
**Francis Kelly Room/Weymouth Town Hall**

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Richard Pattison, Tom Curtis, Ed Walker, Mary Dorey and Jodi Purdy-Quinlan (arrived at 7:30 PM)

ABSENT: Steve Puleo

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kenneth Ryder/Ryder Development

Chairman Clarke called the meeting of May 6th, 2008 meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He began the meeting by announcing that there would be a public hearing this evening and then explained the process.

Public Hearing on 1529 Commercial Street

Chairman Clarke stated that they had before the Commission this evening an application for Demolition of a Structure from Kenneth Ryder/Ryder Development.

Mr. Curtis moved to open the public hearing for 1529 Commercial St.

Seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Mr. Kenneth Ryder came before the Board. He informed members that he has been in business in Weymouth as a developer for 27 years. He explained that he presently has a condominium project located adjacent to the subject site. He said that the owner of the house located at 1529 Commercial St. had been renting it out, but at present the house is empty because he can't find a renter and now wants to sell it. He described the house as being in very bad condition i. e., the interior contained lead paint and mold, a deteriorating/unsafe staircase. Presently he has the purchase of the house under 'agreement' with his goal to incorporate both adjoining parcels.

Mr. Ryder went on to say that the house was built in the 1700's and was floated to this location by ship/barge. At this point there are some safety issues with the structure. He realized that the Weymouth Historical Commission would like to save the dwelling, but he couldn't see the feasibility of doing that. He said he would like to raze the structure and utilize the land. He pointed out that the land in this area is changing with a new commuter rail (E. Weymouth Greenbush station) and businesses; such as, CVS, Dunkin' Donuts and a restaurant. He wanted members to know that his condominium project was unanimously approved by the Planning Board. He told the Commission that if he had more advance notice, he would have looked into saving the structure - just as he did with 32 Sea Street, which can now be found in the National Historical Register. In reference to this house, he didn't see any historical value in the interior, which he commented was totally destroyed. He didn't think there had been any heat in there for some time, which has contributed to its deterioration.

Mr. Ryder then spoke about the possibility of moving the house to a different location, but he didn't see any economical value to moving it nor did he have any use for it. At this point he presented his building plans to the Commission for their review.

Mr. Curtis asked if he wanted to incorporate this land with his existing project in the adjacent lot and Mr. Ryder replied 'yes'.

Mr. Ryder further stated that he had actually looked into moving it to the front of the lot, but aesthetically he didn't feel it wasn't appropriate. He then explained his plan to the members.

The members spoke further with him about relocating it and moving it down.

Mr. Ryder said it was out of the question because it was very big and the only feasible place, zoning wise, would be for it to be located up front. He then described the vegetation of the lot, noting it had a willow tree.

Chairman Clarke stated that if he moved it up front for administrative purposes, he a sign could be posted describing its history.

In further discussion about moving the house, Mr. Ryder told members that it would cost him about \$70,000 for the move and a new foundation - at that point he could possibly sell it as a single family. He said that would be a possibility. He informed the Commission that he was in the real estate business as well as the construction business and he knew what would be involved to do this. He then invited all members to come out to 1529 Commercial Street for a site inspection, adding he felt if they saw it they would understand his viewpoint.

Chairman Clarke asked if the Building Department had looked at it.

Mr. Ryder replied that he believed if the Board of Health looked at it they would condemn it because of the mold, lead paint and unsafe condition of the house/property.

Mr. Pattison commented that the house would have to be gutted and Mr. Ryder agreed.

Mr. Curtis asked if the house could be moved safely and Mr. Ryder told him that anything could be moved, it's just a question of economics. He felt that it was a strong possibility that the cost could actually be greater than \$70,000. He told members that the house on Sea Street had great potential and he didn't mind spending the money there - this site was questionable. He also pointed out that the upstairs rooms and the doorways were small, most likely because of when it was built.

Mr. Pattison told him that he thought the 'wings' were added at a later date and that only the main front of the house is the original construction.

Ms. Dorey stated that the front part of the house was built in 1768.

Mr. Pattison agreed, adding the house itself was built on Grape Island.

Mr. Curtis asked if it was normal to propose anything without first having the deed to the property and Mr. Ryder responded that presently he has the house under contract.

Mr. Ryder then gave the members a little history of the site, stating that the people that own the adjacent parcel (next to 1529 Commercial Street) approached him about purchasing it. At that point he when he went before the Zoning Board and they loved his proposal. The lot before them this evening came out afterward.

Chairman Clarke asked about the time line.

Mr. Ryder told him that the owners are anxious to sell because it is a safety hazard and it has been vandalized twice with the interior being ravaged. He noted that zoning allows the type of use he is proposing re. B-2 and no waivers will be needed. He clarified that it was straight zoning, not 40B, adding that this project is under Special Permit. He further explained that they don't need 5,000-sq. ft. for this house and he didn't think they had it anyway. He said to develop it you need 50 x 100-sq. ft. and he didn't know visually if that is what the Commission wants to see.

Mr. Ryder went on to say that it was important to the Zoning Board to stay away and not develop the front of Commercial Street, using the frontage for landscaping. Additionally, parking would be in the front of the building, informing members that this project calls for (2) spaces per unit in addition to guest parking.

Mr. Pattison stated that the subject house was owned for many years by the Bicknell family and is now the home of the Schofields. He said the father, Sam, owned almost all of East Weymouth Square at one time, adding there is a lot of history there.

(Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived)

Mr. Pattison further stated that the Commission is trying to create the East Weymouth Historical District. He then asked Mr. Ryder if it was viable for him to move the house to the front without it costing him a fortune. He then asked if he researched it further, could he come back before the Commission with a dollar number in 30 days and Mr. Ryder thought he could.

Mr. Pattison further asked Mr. Ryder if could come back with a definitive plan as well as numbers, adding the Commission would ideally like to see a historical plaque in the front of the structure.

Mr. Ryder wanted members to know that he is also keeping it mind what is good for Weymouth, adding he was not in a hurry to move on this as at this time as he has plenty of work. He confirmed that he would return in 30 days with an analysis and have a surveyor come in.

Ms. Lehrer asked if his plan was to move the house to the front of Commercial Street and Mr. Ryder replied 'yes'.

Mr. Pattison said if there is any problem with moving it to the front of the lot, the Historical Commission would voice their support of the project and based on that he felt the Zoning Board should go along with it.

Mr. Ryder reminded members that the state law requires 5,000-sq. ft. of land, plus 50-ft. frontage. He said he could place the focus on the main house, adding he would do due diligence to move it, gut and renovate it. He cautioned members that if someone was to buy it, they would need to know that it was zoned Business.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said her main concern is that the area is potentially a historic district, adding that she and Mr. Pattison and some former members of the Commission in the past had proposed to Jim Clarke to have Weymouth Heights, Weymouth Landing and East Weymouth created as historic districts and requested funding for it - but it was never presented to the Greenbush Mitigation Committee. Further the Committee allotted \$250,000 for Historic Preservation and Parks & Recreation in the Greenbush area. She said her personal concern is no one wanted it to become a historic district, adding this house was in it - but again it was never presented to them and this bothered her. So, if this area was designated as a historic district, this house would never have happened. Now she wants to make sure it doesn't get demolished, but preserved.

Mr. Curtis said that if Mr. Ryder can set up a time for us to view the property, it should include a representative from the Health Department for the purpose of deeming if the house is salvageable - and he would attend.

Mr. Pattison said he would like to take a look at the timbers.

Mr. Ryder stated that he appreciated Ms. Purdy-Quinlan's comments, but wanted to point out to her that the area has substantially changed with the addition of all the new businesses - again, Dunkin' Donuts, CVS, a restaurant as well as a liquor store. He stated it was a zoning issue now, adding it could have been zoned differently, but this is not the case today. He told members that he spent a number of hours and a lot of money on Sea Street and it is now leased as a hospice, which he felt was a great use.

Mr. Ryder next referred to the house next door to the Sea Street property, commenting he didn't know what was going on there but the people have removed all the moldings and covered the house with vinyl siding. He said he thought there were covenants to restrict that. He noted that he was pretty knowledgeable in this area and again, he wasn't sure what was happening there but wanted to bring it to the members' attention.

Chairman Clarke told him that the Commission did not have any jurisdiction there, adding even with the National Historic Register - it only includes structures that conform to that period.

Chairman Clarke then referred to 32 Sea Street; pointing out that the Commission has the ability to propose a 'Local Historic District'.

Mr. Ryder told members that he found it disappointing because the house he spoke about had some great character.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Ken Ryder and Jody Lehrer would conduct a site visit along with any interested Commissioners on Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM.

Mr. Ryder told members that he did a similar project in Hingham, which is on their Town website. He said it was a successful project, also close to the commuter rail and the project includes 21 apartments.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to a similar situation re. Sherrick Farm.

Mr. Pattison noted that they didn't have anything in East Weymouth.

Mr. Walker moved to the public hearing for 1529 Commercial Street to the next meeting on Tuesday, June 10, 2008.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

#### Approval of Minutes

Mr. Curtis moved to approve the minutes of the April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting.

Mr. Pattison seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

#### REPORTS:

##### Town Liaison - Historic Districts Update

Ms. Lehrer stated that since the last meeting she met with both companies; i. e., Timothy Orwig responsible for the Meeting House Historic District PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) R.I. responsible for Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District by PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) of R.I. She said they are both preparing to give the Commission their first submittal - as agreed it will be within 8 weeks. At this point she is expecting them to do so in early June.

##### 43 Bicknell Rd. CPC Update

Mr. Curtis voiced his disappointment over the response to the Request for Proposals. Out of the four companies that were sent an RFP's including PAL, University of Massachusetts/U of M Amherst, only one (Barbara Donohue, RPA) showed up and has since responded to the RFP request. To date they have submitted all résumés and pertinent information. The firm's representatives have also toured the house and viewed the land.

Chairman Clarke asked how close they were to a decision.

Ms. Lehrer referred to the written response from Barbara Donohue, Cultural Resource Consultant - and passed out copies to the members. She noted that they had \$10,000 in funding from CPC and B. Donohue's proposal came in at \$9,970. with a breakdown of all prices included as well as the people that would be involved. She commented that their proposal appeared to be impressive and the Chairman agreed.

It was noted that in Ms. Donohue's submittal she states that Ed Bell told her what they would be looking for; including the type of architectural survey and criteria they would need to qualify.

Chairman Clarke wanted to make sure that Barbara Donohue is responsible for the presentation and that she/representative appears before the Commission to do so.

Ms. Lehrer replied that she was pretty sure that was included in the RFP.

Chairman Clarke then asked about a deadline and Ms. Lehrer replied that it was today May 6<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM. -commenting at this point it looked like it is a done deal for Barbara Donohue.

Mr. Curtis moved to accept the proposal by Barbara Donohue, RPA in the amount of \$9,970 for an intensive (locational) Survey at 43 Bicknell Street, North Weymouth.

Ed Walker seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan took a moment to thank Tom Curtis and the Historical Committee members for pursuing the proposal with the Community Preservation Committee.

Unfinished Business:

Gas Pipeline

Mr. Pattison informed members that the Algonquin Pipeline was following the high-tension line to Holbrook.

Chairman Clarke added that it originated in New Jersey, with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan adding this was the second phase.

Mr. Curtis asked if the pipeline was heading westward and Mr. Pattison confirmed that it was, adding that it was following the present high-tension lines, and going through Ken Ryder's property.

Mr. Walker added that it was also going through Idlewell and the marshland there.

Mr. Pattison further stated that it included partial remnants of an old tidal mill by Mill Cove, going to the right of Thayer's property on Commercial Street.

Ms. Lehrer then took a moment to refer back to Barbara Donohue's proposal, noting she included in her submittal that they would be available to be present for (3) three meetings, including one following the field investigation. She told members that their RFP states that the company must be available for an initial meeting.

Other Business - Weymouth Fire Dept. Video

Mr. Pattison stated that the Weymouth Historical Commission/Weymouth Fire Department video was now available for sale at a cost of \$10.00. Anyone who would like to purchase one would need to go through him. He told members that the total cost to him for creating the video was \$400 and he was hopeful to get it back through the sale of the videos. If more than \$400 comes in the balance will be donated.

Mr. Pattison went on to say that he would like the Chairman to send a note to the School Department to see if they would like a copy for student's History classes. He offered to donate two copies.

Ms. Lehrer asked if there was something in Tufts Museum regarding the Fire Department and Mr. Pattison explained that it belongs to the Weymouth Historical Society, who runs the museum in cooperation with the Commission. He said they could sell them also.

It was agreed that Ms. Lehrer would pass the message on.

Mr. Pattison added that the videos would be on sale at the Fire Department also.

Wey Day

Mr. Curtis asked if the Commission was going to be involved in Wey Day.

Other Business

Mr. Curtis also wanted to suggest the Commission consider creating some 'local' historical districts.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked if there were any re. Jeff Thayer's area, commenting she was very concerned. She said that a house that was torn down on Pleasant Street was a big concern to her, adding that protocol was not followed. She felt this should be discussed further by the members. She said the residents blame the Commission when things like this happen.

Mr. Pattison suggested asking the Building Inspector to notify them when any Building Permits are pulled for any houses 100 years or older - even if they aren't on the 'demo' list.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that she did a Historical Tour of the Town with the Red Hatters and it went well.

Chairman Clarke said that he also did one with the Newcomer's Club, with all the members being over 80 yrs. old - and they loved it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she had an old copy of "Two Forts to Destiny", with Dr. Dempsey as the writer, on Weymouth history - adding it was performed at Merrymount Park in Quincy.

Next Meeting - June

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 10, 2008.

Adjournment

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM.

Mr. Curtis seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

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Ted Clarke, Chairman, WHC

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Date

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeChristoforo  
Recording Secretary