

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
June 12th, 2007 MEETING
Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room

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

ABSENT: Richard Pattison, Ed Walker

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

Chairman

Chairman Ted Clarke called the June 12th, 2007 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Minutes

Mr. Puleo moved to approve the minutes of the February 6th, 2007; April 10, 2007, May 8th, 2007 and the August 8, 2006 minutes as amended.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

III. Reports:

A. Town Liaison

Weymouth Landing New Borders

Ms. Lehrer referred to a letter from the South Shore Hospital to Ted Clarke, requesting comments from the Mass. Historical Commission - and Mr. Jim Clarke wanted to know if anything has been received from Ma. Historical Comm.

The Weymouth Historical Commission, at its meeting on June 12, reviewed documents from your office and from South Shore Hospital with regard to its Cancer Center, Parking Garage construction, and modifications project referenced by your letter of April 19th, and determined that the proposed project will have no adverse effect upon the C.C. Blanchard House, an historically significant building at 809 Main Street.

Chairman T. Clarke responded that the South Shore Hospital has submitted project information regarding some work it is doing including exterior light replacement as part of the main entrance renovations - and work re. the Cardio-Vascular expansion. The remainder of the proposed work would take place at 55 Fogg Road and will take place in the interior of the facility.

Ms. Lehrer noted that they need to send some information on this to Ma. Historical Commission and the Chairman volunteered to do this.

Mr. Curtis asked if they were looking to alter the existing property and Chairman T. Clarke replied 'yes', adding they were apprised of this because the Commission has jurisdiction over 'protected' property within 200 ft. of a historical area.

Ms. Lehrer stated that once the letter is drafted, a copy will be sent to the South Shore Hospital. She then addressed a second question by Jim Clarke - asking about the parking garage at the South Shore Hospital for the state Historical Preservation Office. He replied that his response would note that there would be no adverse affect due to the proposed work, so according to Jim Clarke, no action would be required, but he still wanted the Chairman's input.

Next Chairman T. Clarke informed members that he and Jody Lehrer did a walk-through of Weymouth Landing along with Ms. Betsy Friedberg, adding that an article detailing the walk-through was in the Weymouth News.

Ms. Lehrer referred to the map, noting that the Town's GIS person drew up the map with new boundaries in accordance with their walk-through with the Mass. Historical Commission.

Chairman T. Clarke commented that it is viewed as what might be 'do-able'.

At this point Ms. Lehrer distributed a copy of the new map.

Members were told that their walk started at Tufts Library and then they walked down Summer Street to Commercial and back to Washington Street towards Broad, ending up at the Library. Ms. Friedberg had noted during the walk-through that many historical properties were no longer valuable due to the fact that they have been altered. Ms. Friedberg stated that "donut" holes in proposed districts were not acceptable (sections carved out in the middle of a proposed district). In conclusion, it was recommended by Ms. Friedberg that most of Washington Street be excluded from the proposed district.

Chairman T. Clarke told members that Ms. Friedberg explained to them that there has to be a feeling that it all belongs together - and this was not the case up Washington and up on the Hill. He wanted to emphasize that this is only Ms. Friedberg's recommendation; the Commission does not have to go along it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked why the area by Weston Park was not included and Chairman T. Clarke replied that Ms. Friedberg told him - they aren't keen on including large empty spaces unless it is something like a cemetery with notable people buried there.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that she would like to include the Weston Park area, noting it was referred to in a painting by Bates Torrey of 1852 'Fourth of July Picnic' - but wanted to clarify it was actually an 'abolitionist' event. She felt strongly that it should be protected and the Chairman said he agreed.

Then the inclusion of the Tufts Library was addressed, with Ms. Lehrer saying it was not historical.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated when Greenbush Mitigation was going along with the Review Process (federal review), there was quite a bit of information brought out. She went on to say that the MBTA had to hire an architectural landscaping firm, which originated in Ohio and they felt differently about the Landing buildings and their historical value; i. e., Quirk, but quickly noted it was actually in Braintree.

Chairman T. Clarke said they can cross lines, but it involves more paperwork.

It was noted that west of Front Street is the town line.

Ms. Dorey questioned if the area where Kennedy Eggs (Washington/Commercial St.) was located was included and Chairman T. Clarke told her that Ms. Friedberg felt they needed to draw a line by the old bank building on the corner of Washington and Front Streets, but added they could include Sacred Heart School.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan pointed out that one of the houses on Tremont Street is actually the old North High School, possibly #120.

Chairman T. Clarke continued to speak about Betsy Friedberg's comments and observations during their walk-through with regard to the Landing and the homes in that area, adding that is when she recommended a separate Weymouth Landing area.

Mr. Curtis commented that some of the homes on Front Street were very elegant and members agreed.

Chairman T. Clarke added that Ms. Friedberg also suggested that north Commercial Street could be longitudinal itself.

Ms. Lehrer commented that regarding the area further north of the railroad, Ms. Friedberg had suggested that it could be viewed as another district.

Chairman T. Clarke told members that they could move ahead with one district they were fairly certain about or postpone taking action and do all areas at the same time.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan felt they should do all of Front Street at one time, stopping at Washington and Commercial Streets.

Chairman Clarke explained that the reason they went across the street is to make it the "Landing", adding they have to incorporate some of it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she felt that was silly without including Rhines Lumber and the railroad tracks.

Chairman Clarke replied that all of the historic buildings there are now gone and Ms. Friedberg commented during the walk-through that they couldn't include them if they are all gone.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan noted that Wessagusset House was a hotel and she would like to include #120. She added that ships were built in the Landing in the 1640's-1650's - and this was the 'commercial' area of Weymouth.

Mr. Curtis referred to the historic area as encompassing: "#120 to Ledgehill Road to Phillips, Richmond and including the Park - asking, 'should we also include #115 and #127 Washington Street?' - but then quickly added 'no', that would be including Dunkin Donuts'.

Members felt that area showed it was a "working man's" town. Some homes there were very small in size - 800 sq. ft. to 900 sq. ft.

In referring to the discussed area, the Chairman commented this was 'gerrymandering' at its best.

Mr. Curtis asked if Ms. Friedberg could come before the Commission.

Chairman Clarke responded that in lieu of requesting her to appear he could give them copies of her notes. At this point he asked the Commissioners how they wanted to proceed.

Mr. Curtis restated that he would like her to come before them so they could personally hear her reasons as to why she wanted to exclude some areas and make it a separate district - and then they could all discuss it with her.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan recommended that they call it the "Front Street Historic District", then at a later date they could focus on other areas such as Webb Street, Thayer's Landing.

Chairman Clarke said they could call it "Front Street/Weymouth Landing District" - adding he wouldn't like to put off taking action any longer.

Mr. Curtis informed the members that Mayor Madden would like to have Weymouth Landing have its own identity, and that is why he would like to hear more from Ms. Friedberg about her viewpoint.

Chairman Clarke said that when they are ready to hire a consultant, they could hold a public hearing for public input.

Ms. Dorey said she would like to see the Weymouth Landing area included and Mr. Curtis agreed, adding he realized they could not designate an area with a 'donut hole'.

Chairman Clarke commented that he would like to include the "Hill" and have Betsy walk through that area with him to get her viewpoint/comments.

Ms. Lehrer then told members she would like to see their recommended area noted on the map. She said if they could amend this one, they could just go further east. Then, once there is a consensus, they could have GIS redo the map. She offered to contact Betsy to schedule a date for another next walk-through.

It was noted that Mr. Curtis and other members would like to participate in that walk-through.

Ms. Lehrer said she would send out a few dates to find one that would work for all.

It was agreed that the walk would include Ledgehill, Summit, Webb, Prospect streets and then down.

Other

Plaque Proposal

Ms. Lehrer distributed a handout to all entitled "Application for a Historic House Plaque - Weymouth Historical Commission". She told members she would be posting it soon on the Town's website for public access.

Ms. Lehrer handed out a completed form filled out by a staff person in her office, Bob Luongo/Economic Development Coordinator, who lives at 929-31 Main Street (across from Pleasant Shops). At that point she took a moment to review the completed sections for the members. Summarily she noted that his house was built in 1768 (3-family) and that the house had a direct connection to three historically significant people including Quincy Reed who owned the house and deeded it to Isaac Remick in 1835. He was listed as the first blacksmith in the So. Weymouth area. Further Mr. Remick opened the first American shoe shop in Boston. She went on to speak about his descendants - one of which, J. A. Jackson, became a famous sculptor. She noted that as part of this application, Mr. Luongo would like to call the house The Isaac Remick House. Ms. Lehrer said at some point she would like to convert the application to a PDF format and put it on the website.

B. CPC

Mr. Curtis informed members that he just received the May 24th CPC minutes and noted that Ms. Purdy-Quinlan presented the proposal re. 43 Bicknell Road on behalf of this committee that evening, adding he was not present at that time. (At this point copies were distributed). He told members that basically this proposal was turned down by the CPC in Executive Session.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan interjected that she had heard discussion about the CPC paying for an appraisal of the property, with Mr. Curtis commenting it was his understanding from Chairman Flynn that it was turned down, adding he would get clarification on it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that she was told by member and Town Councilor Arthur Mathews that it was a tie vote 3-3 and they were waiting for all members to be present to vote on the merit of funding an appraisal of the property.

Tom Curtis told members that he spoke with Ed Bell, State Archeologist and he informed him that the Town of Weymouth might want to consider having an archeological survey done to identify its historical resources using CPC funds. He further informed him that the Mass. Historical Society would support the study, but the proposal would have to come from the Weymouth Historical Commission. He then referred to his handout, which showed what he had done since then. He thought they might want to adopt a different approach or possibly a compromise approach, adding to meet time constraints this item would have to be on their next agenda. He was in a favor of an alternative approach. He went on to say that he did some work on appraisals - and the Town of Weymouth assessment for 43 Bicknell was \$383,700. Additionally he did a comparison study of similar homes and the average price for similar property in that area was \$395,000. He felt that possibly a lesser amount for 43 Bicknell would do it - but not over \$425,000.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan recommended they wait to see what happens at CPC's Thursday meeting. She went on to say that she felt strongly that they protect the site, adding that possibly something could be written into the deed; i. e., "in perpetuity".

Mr. Curtis felt it important that the property be evaluated first, stating if you read Mr. Bell's letter that general area of Weymouth is of historical significance - although this particular area could be open to question. The cost of the archaeological survey/study was questioned. He informed members that the CPC gave the Cemetery Committee \$12,000. He told members that part of the problem with the CPC was that the remains at 43 Bicknell had never been authenticated.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that Mass. Historical Society does not know everything, adding that she was also in favor of a survey. She went on to say that at the CPC meetings she attended they discussed splitting off the land. She felt it important that the grave site be protected.

Mr. Curtis wanted to reiterate that they can't move forward until the site is authenticated, adding it would be nice to have the proposal in place by Thursday night's meeting.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members about the financial and personal business regarding the property owners of 43 Bicknell.

Mr. Curtis recommended that these types of personal issues not be included in a future presentation and once again he emphasized the importance of documenting the historical significance of the site to the Town. He told members that a question arose about who authorized/was responsible for recent newspaper articles. He then asked the members if they felt they should have an alternate proposal ready - or 'wait until the dust settles'.

The Chairman said he was waiting for a motion.

Mr. Curtis moved to present a proposal to the CPC to request funding for an archaeological study/survey to be conducted for the purpose of determining the historical significance/authenticity of land at 43 Bicknell Road.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

Discussion: The question was asked 'does the CPC have Ed Bell's article' and Mr. Curtis responded 'no', adding he wouldn't present it.

Mr. Puleo recommended that Ms. Purdy-Quinlan make the presentation.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan responded that she wasn't ready to do that, adding that she didn't know the cost.

Mr. Curtis said he could ask about the money range in the form of a proposal, and then they could move ahead if warranted.

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told a story about Levy Tirrell's tomb at the old Weymouth OSCO location - and OSCO was required to pay for the research re. Mr. Tirrell. Based on the results and its historical significance, their application was withdrawn.

The vote was taken.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Mr. Curtis recommended that Steve Puleo and Ted Clarke make the presentation - but they both reported they would not be available at that evening.

Mr. Curtis said he would ask if he could do it.

Ms. Dorey recommended he ask the CPC if they could table it.

Other Business

Unfinished

1. Signs (Mary)

Ms. Dorey said they are 'ready to roll'. She told members that Michael spoke about making them in groups, instead of one at a time, to be cost effective.

Ms. Dorey suggested that once someone applies the WHC would have to let them know there was no definite timetable for approval/making the sign, with Ms. Lehrer adding they need to be aware that it would take a reasonable amount of time.

Chairman Clarke said that the story is supposed to be in the *Weymouth News* tomorrow.

Ms. Lehrer recommended he speak with Jim Clarke further about it as the work and how to proceed - as it is being done by Town employees.

Ms. Dorey said she was approached by Abigail Adams members and was told that the broken sign has been fixed - but now other Abigail Adams signs are fading. She asked who would be responsible for their replacement.

Chairman Clarke recommended they speak with Ed Walker.

**New
Elections**

Mr. Curtis nominated Ted Clarke for reappointment to the position of Chairman.

There were no other nominations.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ms. Dorey nominated Ms. Purdy-Quinlan as Vice-Chairman.

There were no other nominations.

Mr. Puleo seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Clarke nominated Tom Curtis as the Commission's representative to the Community Preservation Committee.

There were no other nominations.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Clarke nominated Ed Walker as Curator.

There were no other nominations.

Tom Curtis seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Adjournment

Mr. Curtis moved to adjourn at 8:39 PM.

Mr. Puleo seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Next scheduled meeting 9/11//07 - 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan DeChristoforo
Recording Secretary

Ted Clarke, Chairman

Date