

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room
September 8th, 2009 MEETING

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Mary Dorey, Joan Rotondo and Ed Walker

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer, Community Development Coordinator
Jim Clarke, Director of Planning and Community Development

Weymouth Bank Representatives: Robert Terravecchia, Pres/CEO; David Baltucci and
Donald Delaney and Keith Spain

Chairman Ted Clarke called the September 8th, 2009 special meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 6:45 PM.

6:45pm - Public Meeting, Proposed Demolition of 10 Cottage St.

Chairman Clarke began the meeting by explaining the procedure for those present. Members representing Weymouth Bank took a moment to introduce themselves.

Mr. Terravecchia presented packets to the members describing their proposal for the building/property located at 10 Cottage Street in East Weymouth, which included an Executive Summary outlining its proposed use by the Bank. He began his presentation by taking a moment to give the history of Weymouth Bank, further explaining the reason they were desirous of converting the present use of the property for parking purposes by the bank. While addressing the history of the bank he informed members that it was founded in 1889 under the original name of the North Weymouth/Weymouth Cooperative Bank. The name was eventually changed to Weymouth Bank. He quickly noted that they were still chartered by the FDIC (this information was included in their Executive Summary).

Mr. Terravecchia went on to explain that they were seeking a permit to demolish the present structure (apartment building) for the purpose of creating a parking lot, which the bank desperately needs as they do not have one now. The present footprint of their property is just about 100% Weymouth Bank. Early in the 90's they purchased the East Weymouth Savings Bank, which went public and then bankrupt - and the FDIC held it as part of the liquidation. At that point they (Weymouth Bank) were located in South Weymouth and looking to grow. They saw these two parcels in East Weymouth, purchased them and this has been their main office ever since. Initially they had an agreement with the Catholic Church (Immaculate Conception) with regard to using their parking facilities and this had worked well - as their hours do not conflict. Then 6-7 years ago the church increased their rent 6-fold unexpectedly - an unforeseen increase that they were not in favor of. Due to this increase, they worked out an arrangement with the nearby Methodist church in

regard to parking. He said it was a good arrangement as they provided lunch for seniors and the Town plowed the lot. Then the senior lunches moved to the Whipple Center and that arrangement became a problem for them. Now they have a new arrangement whereby they pay a stipend to the church and maintain it (quid pro quo). He added that although the agreement has worked well the bank was apprehensive about the future, being fearful of the same situation reoccurring that happened with the Catholic Church..

Mr. Terravecchia informed members that 10 Cottage Street, owned by the Methodist church was formerly owned by the Hunt family then the Fitzgerald's. At some point they met with them and told them they were interested in purchasing the property at 10 Cottage Street if they ever were interested in selling - then Mr. Fitzgerald contacted them about the sale and they purchased it.. They have now owned the property for 5-years, adding that their long-term plans were to use the lot for parking.

Mr. Terravecchia further explained that as a federally insured bank, they are not permitted to own property and be a landlord. Next the bank requested permission for bank expansion, which would include parking. Three years ago they conducted an internal plan for their bank facilities and decided that in the long run (after 14 years in Jackson Square) they wanted to remain in their present location, adding they have a great relationship with the neighboring businesses and came up with a plan that consisted of 3 phases. The interim plan calls for 2008 renovations of the main office and investing substantial monies. Phase 3 called for creating a parking lot for employees and customers. He referred to the pictures in his proposal (past/present/future with different views from their site) and included pictures of the newly renovated branch. He wanted to point out that local contractors were performing the work. He told members that Don Akins a local artist did the rendering. He informed the Commission that the building used to be Weymouth's Town Hall many, many years ago, adding that the picture of it back then is hanging in the bank. Additionally, the pictures reflected the proximity to both churches and the lack of parking facilities. He also wanted to stress that the present parking arrangement is not conducive to the safety of his employees/customers, as they need to cross Broad Street to use the banking facilities. Also included were pictures of 10 Cottage Street as it presently looks showing the structure including with the apartment units, most of which were vacant.

Mr. Terravecchia felt the lack of parking spoke for itself, adding they need to take control of their own parking and emphasized that they want to stay in East Weymouth, because they really like it there and have good business relations in the community.

Ms. Rotundo asked about the building/occupancy and Mr. Terravecchia told her that the building contained eight (8) units - five (5) of which were occupied, adding the garage is used for storage purposes.

It was noted that the building was 1885 circa.

Mr. Walker stated that he had investigated the property and it looked like the bank used to own the whole thing, with Mr. Terravecchia clarifying not their bank but the previous bank - adding that it had gone bankrupt.

Mr. Terravecchia thought the previous bank had sold it to the catholic church and Mr. Walker agreed, adding that the sale also included the barn - and that it originally looked like a house/church on the property, all one in the same. He said it appeared that some of the property was taken for a right-of-way.

Members were told that the old church burned down and they needed parking.

Mr. Walker acknowledged this was correct, adding they moved the structures (house/barn) quite a way in. He went on to say that he got a lot of items out of the old bank back then, clarifying that some came from their Boardroom. He said that he brought his trailer down and the bank gave him permission to take everything.

Mr. Terravecchia told those present that when they purchased the bank from the FDIC, the Weymouth Historical Commission had been contacted.

Chairman Clarke wanted to clarify that the reason they wanted to raze the building was for employee parking and Mr. Terravecchia acknowledged this was correct, adding that he would like to devise a plan and sit down with the Historical Commission when it was complete to discuss it.

Mr. Terravecchia emphasized that they did not want the present building open for the winter months due to a serious drug problem in the area.

Chairman Clarke asked him 'if we chose to delay our decision for 6 months, what would you do?'

Mr. Terravecchia replied that he would continue to rent, but he also wanted to point out that he would need time to evict the present tenants and then get all the utilities disconnected in order to get the 'demo' permit. He acknowledged that the building still looked charming from the outside, but 'not' the inside. He noted that two of the apartments were very small and to bring it up to code would cost substantial monies.

Chairman Clarke realized he would need to give the tenants ample notice and to work under the law.

Mr. Terravecchia noted that they are 'tenants at will' and they are aware of the bank's plans, noting that he has been very up front with them. He told members that he would like to do something tasteful.

Chairman Clarke thanked the Bob Terravecchia and the Weymouth Band representatives for taking the time to appear before the Commission and explain their plans.

Before conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Walker asked if the property was once the Hunt's home and Jim Clarke replied that it wasn't, clarifying theirs was located down the street.

Mr. Terravecchia showed them the house on the plan, clarifying that it used to be an apartment building that Mr. Hunt owned and rented out.

Mr. Walker again commented that he thought Mr. Hunt had lived there.

Mr. Terravecchia replied 'he might have'. Mr. Terravecchia then described the interior of the building for the members noting that it was in very poor condition.

Ms. Dorey asked if the rent being charged was reasonable.

Mr. Terravecchia replied that for the size and condition he believed it was. He added that some tenants work and some don't. He told members that at this point in time he didn't like the goings-on over there, adding he suspected they could find other places for their purposes.

Jim Clarke told the Commission that he had been inside and found no architectural details on the interior, adding that overall he didn't think there was anything of architectural value.

One bank representative commented that he saw it as a 'fire trap'.

Mr. Terravecchia said he would be happy to walk any of the members through it, with Mr. Walker replying he might stop in.

The meeting concluded.

7:00 pm - Regular Meeting of WHC

Chairman

Introduction of new members

Chairman Clarke then called the September 8, 2009 regular meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:20 PM.

Chairman Clarke introduced new member Don Matheson to the members, adding that he has served on the Commission in the past and was looking forward to returning.

Chairman Clarke then announced that the October meeting would take place on Tuesday, 10/13/09. He informed members that Channel 11/Local cable would be featuring a segment on the Historical Commission in October (usually on Mon., Wed. or Friday), adding that it was written about a year ago and taped in May. He noted that since it was taped some months ago, some of the recent events were not included such as the status of 43 Bicknell St.

Announcements

Minutes, June 2nd, 2009

Mr. Walker moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2009 meeting. (it was noted that this meeting was in two parts - the public hearing and the regular monthly meeting).

Motion was seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Reports

Town Liaison

Ms. Lehrer updated members on the historical plaques, stating that she spoke with the sign vendor who will be working on the most recent order of two (2) signs - noting that (3) had been approved:

- * 58 Church Street (on 2/10)
- * 386 Front Street (on 5/12)
- * 104 Lake Street (on 12/9)

She noted that it has been almost one year for some since the request was made, adding she would place the order.

Sea Street Historical District, Legion Field

Ms. Lehrer informed members that the Sea Street Historical District would be listed successfully. With regard to Legion Field, she asked the members to look at the historical qualifications of the wall - in regard to CPC funds.

Stetson Cupola

Next, Ms. Lehrer reported that they have received Section 106/National Preservation Act re. the Stetson cupola. At this point they are asking for the members' comments, adding they have 30 days from 8/18/09 to respond/comment.

Chairman Clarke pointed out that some requests/notices had come in over the summer months when they don't meet - and unless the matter is urgent he usually lets them go.

Jim Clarke in referring to the cupola commented that in many cases it is a benefit to some churches (Pilgrim Church in No. Weymouth and Old South Union) - adding they can install the cupola then get the funding for it.

J. Clarke then referred to the Stetson Building cell towers - stating that its site plan review was before the Planning Board and he personally was not happy with it. It was noted that the Stetson Building is a designated historical structure. J. Clarke felt that the owners did a great job when they restored the building and maintaining its historical value. Further he informed members that this hearing has been continued. He spoke to the owner and asked them to take another look at it, commenting that he felt they could do a better job. At this point they have withdrawn their proposal and are rethinking their approach to it.

J. Clarke explained to the members that the FCC's policy is if there is no coverage in certain areas the town has to allow the ability to cite a structure - but fortunately the owner has agreed to take another look at it. He informed members that the Town/Planning Board have permitting authority; i. e., any health impacts. He said they are charged as the carrier to provide service and the communities are obligated to give a good reason if they deny it when there is a gap in coverage. He pointed out that they would need to craft their decision appropriately.

Chairman Clarke asked if 'aesthetics' is a reason and J. Clarke responded that it certainly was an issue that could be raised, adding they could request materials to be used; i.e., camouflage - adding only a GPS unit has to be exposed.

Mr. Walker asked about the original elevator shaft, with Mr. Clarke replying that it was an open atrium now.

Mr. Walker next asked if it could go inside and out of site and J. Clarke replied 'that it is not equipment, the antennas are bigger than a window'. He has asked the owner to look at putting them inside.

Old Business

Fogg Library

Mr. Walker asked Jim Clarke if the Fogg Library project had gone out to bid and J. Clarke responded 'yes', but they didn't have any success. He then asked if the building would have to sit another winter and Jim Clarke replied 'yes'. He then asked if it would survive over the cold months and if J. Clarke thought the price would go up.

J. Clarke explained that they planned on re-bidding the job this Winter, adding that any dangers to the building are being monitored. He told members that they had made some repairs to the roof. It is hoped that any damage that might be incurred will be minor. He further explained if they have to remove any more stone, it is expected that the price might increase. Further they had looked at doing some work this Fall, but they had to take into consideration the use of historic mortar in cold weather, which was a big concern - so it didn't make any sense, as they might possibly have to shut the job down.

Jim Clarke went on to point out that Mass. Historical has oversight on this.

When asked if their oversight was active or passive, J. Clarke replied 'passive' adding they are kept apprised and they also signed off on the exterior work.

Mr. Walker noted that they were using Preservation money. He commented if the funding is a big concern, then possibly nothing could be accomplished.

J. Clarke told him that was not the plan, noting that the Town Council passed the Ordinance (REO). He said they are committed to going through a number of steps. Further, those that submit a bid for a second time will need to be requalified, adding that roofers and masons were pre-qualified. He explained that the general contractor was the only bidder and his bid was way out of line and consequently rejected. Now with the new bid, there is no REO requirement, so it is anticipated that there will be more bidders.

New Business

Legion Field

J. Clarke informed members that Mayor Kay looked at Legion Field, adding if you go down to the Field now you could see minor changes taking place. With limited funds she has made some adjustments. He noted that there were some plantings there now. Additionally, the press box has been removed and they have spread the existing loam east to the football field - where they will be hydro seeding. At this point they are waiting for funding.

Jim Clarke further informed members that Mayor Kay has also asked the CPC to look at the Memorial Wall - the Ladies Auxiliary were responsible for it when it was constructed. Again, they are looking for CPA money and they are evaluating it now. They are also asking the Historical Commission to look at it and give their comments in reference to it being a historical resource. At this point Mr. Clarke took a moment to read the definition of a 'historical resource'.

Mr. J. Clarke went on to say that in the early 90's the 1st National Register District included Legion Field. When the state looked at it they felt there were too many elements; i. e., the civic aspect as well as the homes - so they cut it back, which was a disappointment to him. He felt the brick wall at Legion Field should have been included along with Town Hall and the amphitheater wall. He noted that at this point the CPC has not taken any action because they first want to hear from this Commission. They are now looking at the cost, which was \$750,000 - money they don't have, so they are considering a different approach.

Chairman Clarke opened the topic for discussion.

Mr. Walker stated that the original Legion Field was constructed in 1924 and questioned the date of the Memorial Wall.

J. Clarke thought it was created around the early 1930's, adding that it was his understanding that the Ladies Auxiliary of the American Legion helped to pay for it.

Mr. Walker thought if they owned the paintings they might own the wall and then it would make it eligible for funds/grants.

Ms. Dorey moved to recognize the Memorial Wall at Legion Field as having significant historical value to the Town of Weymouth.

Mr. Walker seconded.

Discussion: It was questioned who in 1925 came up with the name. It was noted that the field was in use in 1935 when the wall was finished and they had the dedication for the gate on Middle Street. The big ceremony was hosted by the Gold Star Mothers and Auxiliary in honor of the men who served/died in WWI.

Ms. Dorey asked if the gate is kept locked and the answer was 'yes'.

The Chairman then took the vote.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Clarke stated that they could delay the demolition on the Cottage Street property for 6 months, then asked for a motion.

J. Clarke said he understood the concern regarding the streetscape. He informed members that he told Bob Terravecchia that the Town /Commission would want to work with him on this. He added if the members would like to take action, then he would recommend that the Bank come back with the proposed plan(s). He wanted to point out that the Bank said it was not their intention to sell the property and had offered it back to the Fitzgerald's.

Mr. Walker asked if there was any land across the way where the house could be resituated and J. Clarke replied that the Fitzgerald's own the land across the way.

Ms. Rotundo asked if the value was only in the shell of the structure and J. Clarke replied 'yes'.

Jim Clarke asked the members if they voted to delay a vote on the property 6 months, what would change then? He understood it would be putting a hold on the demo delay, but then pointed out that during that 6 month period they could chose to vote on a different motion. He told members that Mr. Terravecchia might come back to them and say that he couldn't find anyone to move the house.

Chairman Clarke commented that he really didn't see a good reason for the delay.

Mr. Walker suggested they just hold off on the vote until their October meeting.

Mr. Clarke told the Commission that they are required to act within 7 days, so tonight they should be taking some type of action. He clarified by reading the following requirement 'within 7 days of determination they must notify the Inspector of Buildings - from the date of the hearing'.

Mr. Walker moved to approve the demolition of the structure located on 10 Cottage Street with the stipulation that the Commission sees the site plan first.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Walker said he would like to save the front door with the side windows.

Chairman Clarke asked where they would store it.

Mr. Walker said the question is 'when was the house divided from the bank', commenting it looks like the bank owned it all to start with.

The Chairman asked for a vote on the motion.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Reorganization-Discussion

Chairman Clarke told members that they were supposed to have an election of officers once a year, which included the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk, as well as, their representative/designee on the CPC/Community Preservation Committee. He said at this point he preferred to hold off on the vote and address it when other openings need to be filled.

Mr. Walker moved to hold the election of the Weymouth Historical Commission officers in October.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

At this point Ms. Dorey read from the Weymouth Town Report about Howard Prescott for 1935 Town Representative, commenting that it appeared he designed a number of town buildings - so based on that she felt the structure should be viewed as historical.

Adjournment

Ms. Dorey moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Mr. Walker seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ted Clarke, Chair

Date

Respectfully submitted, Susan DeChristoforo

Recording Secretary