

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
October 9th, 2007 Meeting
Kelly Room - Weymouth Town Hall

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Richard Pattison, Mary Dorey, Steve Puleo, Ed Walker
& Tom Curtis
ABSENT: Jodi Purdy-Quinlan
ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, DPCD

Chairman

Chairman Clarke called the Oct. 9th, 2007 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Members agreed to table approval of the September 9th, 2007 minutes until the next meeting.

Chairman Clarke moved to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2007 minutes as amended.

Motion seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED (Mr. Pattison abstained as he was not present at that meeting.)

Chairman Clarke moved to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2007 minutes as amended.

Motion seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Reports:

A. Town Liaison

Ms. Lehrer distributed a letter dated 9/22/07 sent to the Chairman from the Abigail Adams Historical Society in response to the Commission's suggestion to name the newly proposed historical district which includes the area surrounding the Abigail Smith Adams house as the "Abigail Adams Historic District". Essentially the Society wrote that they did not believe the name accurately reflected the historical origins of the area, as the proposed district also encompassed the cemetery and the original and current site of the birthplace of The First Church. Included in the letter were a variety of reasons outlining why they were in favor of a different name for the District and included the following:

- part the cemetery located there is where many of the earliest settlers in Weymouth were buried - including Abigail's parents
- Abigail lived in her family home under her maiden name of 'Smith' and none of the Adams family ever lived there
- With the passing of time they expected the name Abigail would be dropped and it would be known as the 'Adams' Historic District
- It would add confusion to the home of the John Adams as well as the home of Abigail & John Adams both located in Quincy

In closing they recommended thought be given to one of the following names: The First Church Historic District or The (First) Meetinghouse Historic District.

(File Note: It was noted that this letter was actually addressed to 75 Middle St. (Town Hall) and was received by the Planning Dept. and not Chairman Clarke.)

Mr. Pattison spoke next, noting that he was the person who suggested the name "The Abigail Adams Historic District". He felt this name was appropriate because the first name on the Town's list of Square's is (Abigail)

Adams Square - and 'legally' that is the name. He wanted the Planning Department to research this further. He noted that the Society was referring to the Adams Historic District, which is located in the City of Quincy, but the name in the Square is Adams Square. He added that he recently saw it referred to on Bridge Street, commenting there is some mix-up there.

Mr. Pattison went on to give the history of the area, noting that the Meeting House was originally owned by John Whitman. He stated that he had no problem with the recommendation of the AAHS, but not for the reasons stated. He said he had no problem with 'Whitman Square' either, but at this point he reiterated he would like to see Jim Clarke research it further. He told members that he personally preferred the Weymouth Heights Historic District.

Mr. Walker agreed with Mr. Pattison, adding it was listed as 'Adams Square' in the book. In addition he pointed out, John Adams School is still located there and that school is included in the Historic Register. He also felt it important to note that Abigail was born there. He personally was in favor of the name "The Abigail Adams Historic District".

Mr. Puleo spoke next, stating that he saw some good points in the AAHS letter, agreeing that the name could be confusing - even for Quincy. He said he would like to balance the request and accommodate them.

Ms. Dorey agreed with Mr. Puleo, commenting she was going to suggest Abigail Smith Adams, but realized it would still be referred to as 'Adams'.

Chairman Clarke addressed the members, stating that as it stands now we're calling it "Abigail Adams" - and based on tonight's discussion he was calling for a vote.

Mr. Curtis moved to rescind the name of Abigail Adams Historic District for that portion of the Town.

Mr. Puleo seconded.

SO VOTED (Mr. Pattison was opposed)

Chairman Clarke said he supported the majority vote.

Ms. Dorey asked if 'Weymouth Heights' would be confusing and Mr. Pattison suggested the name "The Weymouth Heights Historic District", commenting he was not in favor of the Society's recommendation.

Mr. Pattison moved the name "Weymouth Heights Historic District".

Ms. Dorey seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Walker said the problem with the name was that it leaves out reference to the Abigail Adams House.

Mr. Curtis asked if members thought they should run it by the AAHS.

Ms. Dorey suggested they invited the author of the letter, Cathy Torrey, President of the Abigail Adams Historic Society, to the next meeting to discuss it.

Chairman Clarke replied that he felt the Commission should maintain their decision making, commenting that the AAHSociety seems to want to include mention of the Church - and acknowledged the area included the cemetery, railroad crossing and Adams School.

Mr. Pattison briefly spoke about the Common and its original use.

Mr. Walker wanted to include mention of the Revolutionary War and the militia site, which was the location of Weymouth's first Town Hall.

Mr. Pattison said he had no objection to the name of the 'Meeting House', but felt that 'Weymouth Heights' was more appropriate.

The Chairman then took Mr. Pattison's motion to name the district "The Weymouth Heights Historic District".
MOTION LOST 1-3-1 (Mr. Curtis, Mr. Puleo and Mr. Walker were opposed and Ms. Dorey abstained)

Mr. Curtis said he would like to hear from the Abigail Adams Historic Society, acknowledging that their Chairman was in favor of the Commission maintaining the decision making, but he felt at this point they have become involved in the process. He felt they should explore the name along with the Abigail Adams Historic Society, realizing that the Commission has the final vote.

Mr. Puleo referred to the Society's two recommended names, commenting that he was most comfortable with the name The (First) Meeting House Historic District, adding that he did not feel it was necessary to include The First Church.

In response to a question, Mr. Pattison explained the difference between the Abigail Adams Historic Society and the Commission is that the Abigail Adams Historic Society is a private Society and the Town endorses the Commission.

Mr. Walker moved to name the district "The (First) Meeting House Historic District".
Motion Seconded.

SO VOTED 3-2 (Mr. Curtis and Mr. Pattison were opposed)

Mr. Puleo thought it would be a courtesy for someone to inform Cathy Torrey/AAHS of the vote and it was agreed that Ms. Lehrer would do that.

Town Liaison: (cont'd):

Ms. Lehrer informed members that Jim Clarke wanted members to know that the work on the bridge by Abigail Adams Park is continuing.

Additionally, members were informed that there would be a re-enactment of the wedding of Abigail and John Adams on October 25th and the public was invited.

Chairman Clarke told members that he planned on attending.

Mr. Pattison questioned an email from the Weymouth Historical Society re. 402 Essex Street - and asked if they would be using 'slate', with Ms. Lehrer replying 'yes'. He was glad to hear that as he was in favor of slate.

CPC Update

Tom Curtis reported that there was no action taken at their last meeting, but there is a meeting coming up on Oct. 12th. With regard to 43 Bicknell - he told members that he spoke with the owner who was hesitant about an archaeological survey. At that point he emailed Ms. Lehrer to see if she could convince the owners to go along with it. He told members that if the study is to go forward, he felt the CPC would vote to fund it. As far as buying the property, he believed it was out of the question, noting that it is presently assessed at \$373,000, but the owners are asking for about \$500,000. He asked the Commission if they had any suggestions on how they could pursue this further, adding that he would like to see the survey take place. He reminded members that the anniversary is coming up and based on the timing, he would like to see this avenue pursued. He said it was permissible for him to make the proposal to the CPC even though he is a member.

Mr. Pattison suggested that they might send a letter to Ms. Purdy-Quinlan to see why their email was not responded to. He said if they don't hear anything further from her, then he can expect the idea for an archaeological survey would be a lost cause.

Ms. Dorey thought it might be a good idea to have the CPC send the letter.

Mr. Curtis commented that their proposal, which was presented by Ms. Purdy-Quinlan was too grandiose. He was proposing they try to get "X" number of dollars and put it in the form of a proposal. He felt they might get better results if it comes from the Commission.

Chairman Clarke commented that he didn't think the archaeological proposal would go, adding he's heard nothing back from either party. He said if all their historical facts are accurate, they could have a 'marker' placed there instead and set it up as part of Wessagusset Garden.

Mr. Curtis wanted to clarify that they were talking about two separate proposals. He noted that a plaque commemorating what occurred might not be relevant to the study. He felt it was more important they pursue an archaeological study, pointing out that so far there has been a lot of talk without any validation.

Mr. Curtis felt they should meet with the Abigail Adams Historic Society as well as the Weymouth Historical Society and get their input.

Chairman Clarke asked 'why not give it one more shot'. He agreed to send the letter.

Mr. Pattison asked Mr. Curtis if there were any other requests before the CPC besides 43 Bicknell St. He referred to the 'canoe' housed in the Museum at Tufts Library, which was addressed by Mr. Walker at the last meeting. He suggested they might also want to request a study there. Re. the railroad tracks, he noted they are working on the Weymouth Landing District and using the money they have for Weymouth Heights. In the past he had requested re. the South Weymouth Historic District. He felt they should submit a separate request for the study of that area in the amount of \$10,000/\$20,000. Additionally they have Weymouth Landing, East Weymouth, Columbian Square and Union Street. He would like to request they put them before the CPC.

Chairman Clarke asked about Columbian Square.

Mr. Pattison said he didn't see how a request for a historical proposal would affect a historical request for Columbian Square.

The Chairman agreed, saying there was no connection. He noted that in keeping with the guidelines of the CPA, 10% of the money is to go toward historical preservation. He said he would like to see a report on what they have spent so far, as they have no information on where it's been spent - asking where is their 10%?

Mr. Curtis pointed out that the CPA/CPC was only founded about 12-14 months ago and at that time they were under tight time constraints to approve the budget - adding they just made the November 1st deadline. He wanted to clarify that 5% goes to administration, 10% for Preservation and Restoration and 25% for Low Income Housing, Historical and Open Space for a total of 40%.

Mr. Curtis went on to explain that they never received matching funds for the first year, but in 2006 they received matching funds re. \$496,000 and this year the amount is \$500,000. Re. Monies spent for Historical Preservation and Restoration - they expended funds for Fogg Library (approximately \$275,000), with some funds for the Preservation of Cemeteries and some for Open Space. He wanted the members to know, as their representative, he has been very vocal regarding the importance of expending funds on historical preservation and restoration - but he wanted to point out - if they don't include monies for maintenance and management he is opposed to it. He told members that it was Mayor Madden's idea to have four distinct villages, but without the support of with shopowners and property owners it would be difficult to accomplish this.

Chairman Clarke said he would like prioritize Jackson Square before Columbian Square.

Mr. Walker wanted, once again, to emphasize his concern re. the preservation of the Indian canoe. He explained that presently there is only a humidifier in the Museum and is it not working. He said they would need to make a case regarding the importance of environmental protection. He asked for help writing up proposal for the canoe, as he has run into a road block re. Polyurethane Glycote.

Mr. Pattison said first they would need funds to pay for an expert in this area and Ed agreed, adding they would first need to find a resource for an expert. He added that they would also have to go out to bid.

Chairman Clarke emphasized the first step was to write the proposal.

Mr. Curtis wanted to members to know that all the expenditures of the CPC go on the Town's website. He offered to contact Ed Bell of the Massachusetts Historical Commission to see if he has a resource re. the canoe. He also realized that the canoe should be stored in a temperature controlled environment. He asked Mr. Walker to email him exactly what he needed and offered to help fill out the CPA proposal form.

Columbian Square

Mr. Walker referred to Columbian Square - telling members that it was important they keep on top of it. Next he referred to Bailey Green (the island) - commenting that it was very historic and that they needed to protect it from being illuminated.

Mr. Pattison said that he saw the preliminary plan with Jim Clarke, adding they are now talking about enlarging the 'green' and going into the library's property, but he wasn't exactly sure about the details.

Chairman Clarke told members he would speak further about this with Jim Clarke.

Ms. Lehrer noted that their contact person in this particular subject is Bob Luongo in the Planning Department, adding that he has all of the information on Columbian Square. She commented that he could possibly come before the Commission.

Chairman Clarke said that for now they would keep an eye on it. He suggested they send out letters saying they are interested in the outcome.

Ms. Lehrer encouraged letting Mr. Luongo know about their concerns. She stressed that someone on the Commission needs to convey the details.

Mr. Pattison was encouraged to speak with Mr. Luongo.

Ms. Lehrer told members that the consultant has already studied the area.

Mr. Walker suggested they recommend a historical style traffic light at Columbian Square - one similar to those used in South Braintree Square and Hingham Square.

Chairman Clarke agreed that they needed to communicate this and asked that Mr. Walker be the adviser on the Commission's behalf

Mr. Walker agreed to do so.

Ms. Lehrer said it was important to clarify that the meeting was to get the member's input and hear their concerns.

Re. the issue 'should they go out for bid/procurement'. It was noted that the Procurement Office advises contacting a minimum of three (3) people with this type of expertise (possibly at a Museum or M.I.T).

Chairman Clarke asked Ms. Lehrer if she ever heard back from Mr. Bergman/MHC and she replied 'no', adding that she had tried a few times, but offered to try again.

Mr. Walker told members that recently a judge had ruled that if money had been set aside for a Park to be built- the money could not be spent on anything else.

Mr. Curtis said that the CPC is considering funding Wessagusset Field and Sullivan Park - and that money has been allocated for both. He added that he would have to see how that proceeds.

Next Meeting

Chairman Clarke announced that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, November 13th, 2007.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Susan DeChristoforo, Recording Secretary

Ted Clarke, Chairman

Date