

**WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room**  
**October 13th, 2009 Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Ted Clarke/Chairman, Mary Dorey, Joan Rotondo, Don Matheson, Ed Walker and new member Phil Smith

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jody Lehrer, Community Development Coordinator  
Keith Spain, Resident

Chairman Ted Clarke called the October 13th, 2009 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

**Chairman**

Chairman Clarke took a moment to introduce new member Phil Smith and asked if he would tell a little bit about himself.

Mr. Smith stated that he was originally from East Braintree then moved to Weymouth in 1985. He then joined the Weymouth Historical Society and commented that in that role he met Joan Rotundo and Ed Walker. While a member of the Historical Society he became their Curator and then their President. He has also worked with Mr. and Mrs. Cormack in the past - and although he has been away from this field for a while, he is now happy to be back.

When asked to say a few words, Keith Spain, a resident in the audience, stated that he has been a lifelong resident of Weymouth and had an interest in its history.

**Minutes**

Since all the members did not have an opportunity to review the September minutes, the Chairman tabled their approval until the next meeting.

**Reports**

**Town Liaison**

Ms. Lehrer reported that the Fogg Library construction prequalification of contractors is underway and bids are expected this winter, with the Notice to Proceed due in early March.

Fogg Library Reuse Update - there are no new meetings scheduled at this time.

Legion Field Wall - Gene Raymond was hired and will report to the CPC.

43 Bicknell - is presently under review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Work at Abigail Adams is presently under review by the Abigail Adams Society

**Unfinished Business****Election of Officers**

Mr. Walker nominated Ted Clarke as **Chairman**.

Ms. Rotundo seconded.

There were no further nominations.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

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

Mr. Smith seconded.

There were no further nominations.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Clarke moved to nominate Don Matheson as the Commission's **Designee to the Community Preservation Committee**.

Mr. Walker seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Mr. Matheson moved to nominate Ed Walker as the Commission's **Curator for the Museum**.

Mr. Smith seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Chairman Clarke moved to nominate Phil Smith as the **Clerk** for the Commission.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**New Business**

Ms. Lehrer spoke about the NOBIS letter which referred to work on Route 53 at the intersection of Middle and Washington Streets and is presently under Section 106/Environmental Review. It was noted that because the work would be supported in part by Federal funds they are required to notify the Historical Commission of the proposed work and give them an opportunity to comment. Ms. Lehrer further explained that the proposed work involved the widening of the road at this intersection and new traffic signals.

Chairman Clarke noted that he received a letter regarding a single family home, but noted that it did not involve the Commission because the home was not included on the demo delay list.

Chairman Clarke asked Ms. Lehrer about the status of historical house signs and Ms. Lehrer reported that the approved house sign orders are going to the sign maker, but beyond that there was nothing new.

**Awards Luncheon**

Ms. Lehrer asked if any members were planning to attend the Awards Luncheon sponsored by the Mass. Historical Commission on October 27<sup>th</sup>. If so she asked that they let her know, adding that she and Jim Clarke attend as well as Mayor Kay would be attending.

Chairman Clarke said he planned on attending as well as Don Matheson and Joan Rotundo.

Ms. Lehrer went on to say that their invitation was due in part to Chairman Clarke's work (along with other committee members) re. Weymouth's historical homes video. The MHC historical homes video also included homes in communities of Concord, Duxbury and Boston.

Chairman Clarke commented that the recognition of their video was based on the educational and public relations aspects. He told members that the new video will be out Saturday/Monday. He further informed members that they took some pictures of Jackson Square. Some were of the Square as it looked in the past (with old cars) and another on how it looks today. There was also one of Webb State Park.

### **Historical District**

Ms. Lehrer informed the new members that in the recent past the Historical Commission voted to hire consultants to research and make presentations on the following two areas in Weymouth:

- 1) Weymouth Landing/Front Street District
- 2) Meeting House District (which was originally going to be called the Abigail Adams District)

Ms. Lehrer went on to say that the consultants prepared the reports and then they were submitted to the Mass. Historical Commission. She noted that PAL was the company/consultant that did the work for Weymouth Landing/Front Street - this work was submitted last September (2008). The work on the Meeting House District was done by Timothy Orwig and is now before the Mass. Historical Commission. She pointed out that it was a 2-year process. At this point she is pursuing an update, commenting they possibly have another year to go.

Chairman Clarke thought they might be able to get an update at the upcoming Luncheon and Ms. Lehrer agreed.

Ms. Lehrer said they are presently waiting on the vote, informing members that the MHC had forgotten to inform the Planning Department that they had been waiting on information from the consultant - this has contributed to the delay. To avoid this type of thing happening in the future, she will request that they are "copied" on all correspondence.

Mr. Matheson asked if the Sea Street area included the new land at the end; i. e., Wessagusset Gardens.

The Chairman replied 'no', clarifying it was only on the Bridge Street side - from Thomas corner to Bicknell Square.

Mr. Matheson noted that there were a lot of shoe factories in that area at the turn of the century.

Chairman Clarke said they did have some of that information. He then asked Ms. Lehrer to check with Jim Clarke about the signs for the area.

Ms. Lehrer asked about the verbiage for the signs and Chairman Clarke responded "he would know", adding "it would be the same as the Civic Center" - with Ms. Dorey adding "and Central Square Historical District".

Mr. Walker interjected that they would also need signs at the Town Green/Church and North Street - clarifying it is just across from First Church where our militia drilled for the Revolutionary War. He said the sign would commemorate the event, adding it was then known as the Weymouth Town Common.

Ms. Lehrer asked if it was voted on and Mr. Walker replied 'no'.

It was noted that the words 'Weymouth Town Common' might be found on old maps of the area.

Chairman Clarke referred to a recent PBS special, noting people called him in reference to a photo of the First Church (Abigail Adams father preached there). He then received a second call and was asked if there were any other churches that might be older.

Mr. Walker commented that there are drawings somewhere on an earlier church.

Chairman Clarke added that he sent them some information including a picture of the church taken at John and Abigail's wedding.

Mr. Walker and Chairman Clarke discussed First Church, with Mr. Walker noting that explosives were stored in the basement for use in the Revolutionary War - noting that the church was rebuilt with money they made from the materials sold. In the past the church acted as a meeting house as well as the town hall, with Mr. Walker commenting that the combination of church and state goes back quite a while.

Mr. Walker further pointed out that back in those days the local townspeople were 'required' to attend church services on Sunday (with the parishioners including those who lived in North Weymouth).

Mr. Matheson told members that the Pilgrim Church goes back to 1851 and that the First Church came later.

Mr. Walker added that the First Church/meeting house had been moved from its original location.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Dorey asked about new condos to be located at 215 Middle Street.

Mr. Spain said they were across from the old YMCA - a couple of doors down from the Jefferson School - and involved land from residents' houses and a driveway.

Mr. Walker asked Ms. Lehrer about the status of the old YMCA building and Ms. Lehrer replied that the process was still ongoing.

Mr. Walker pointed out that was part of the historic district and asked if there would be any impact.

Keith Spain said that means they are required to maintain it in a certain way.

It was clarified that that rule only applied if the property is designated as being in a 'Local' Historic District - and this is not the case in Weymouth, but is most likely in Hingham.

Mr. Walker referred to the Clapp building, stating that they have an 'Agreement' to keep the exterior 'as is'.

Ms. Dorey asked if it would benefit them to pursue the "Local Historic District" designation.

Chairman Clarke replied that it would be difficult for a town like Weymouth to get a 'local historic designation' passed by Town Council - although it would be easier in a town like Hingham. He added that the Council is cognizant of property values.

The Chairman then told members that President Roosevelt once said that the town of Hingham had the best looking "Main Street" in America - and commented 'yet Weymouth has more historic buildings'.

Mr. Walker referred to Town Hall, commenting the Commission could focus on taking more historic buildings. He went on to say that if they had a larger historic district, he felt the Meeting House Historic District would be more appropriate - including size wise.

Mr. Spain wanted to point out that the 'local' process would be more tedious - even a 'window' would require the Historical Commission's input. He stressed that it was a very strict criteria - and that those in this District are not permitted to change the color, architecture, windows, etc.

Mr. Walker said that he was thinking of just focusing on specific buildings like the Town Hall, Fogg Library and buildings within the historic district (public buildings).

Mr. Spain commented that he found the Fogg Library an interesting building, pointing out that it was nationally recognized.

Chairman Clarke told Mr. Walker that his idea made sense, but he would need to look at the definition more closely.

It was noted that his information could be found on the Mass. Historical Commission's website.

### **Legion Field**

Mr. Spain commented that at the last meeting the members voted to declare Legion Field's historic significance. At that time he thought they were referring to the entire field, which predates the 'wall'. He asked if just the Wall was before the CPC and if so he felt the members should vote to include the entire Field, which he said dated back to 1925 - adding that the wall wasn't added until 1935.

Mr. Spain was told that the CPC looks to the Historical Commission to address the historic sites/areas in the Town.

At this point the portion of the Community Preservation Act re. funding criteria was read for benefit of the members - and it included the restoration of historic structures/resource determination by local Historic Commissions to be significant, etc.

Mr. Spain said that he called some of the members and described the background of Legion Field.

Mr. Spain said that Legion Field has historic significance to the Town of Weymouth. He said that he went to the Committee's Planning meeting where they pretty much talked about Legion Field Wall and he told them that he thought the Historical Commission voted on the entire Field, but some didn't agree.

Chairman Clarke told him that his logic was good, but commented that it could be a funding issue; i. e., to do the entire field over could be a big chunk of change. He noted that the Commission's new designee Don Matheson would be attending their next meeting and could address these types of issues for them.

Mr. Walker commented that at this point he wasn't sure what the Town was doing with Legion Field.

Mr. Spain told members that he realized they couldn't stipulate what the CPC does with their money, but they could designate the entire property has having historical significance. When asked if he meant he would like to see the entire site left 'as is', he replied 'yes'.

Mr. Walker told Mr. Spain that the Town has had many problems with the field over the years.

Chairman Clarke replied that the Commission could say the 'historic significance' designation goes for the entire field - then see what they do with it.

Mr. Walker said they are trying to start somewhere first; pointing out that the wall is falling down. He added that maybe the Commission could save the entire field for another time.

Mr. Walker moved to include all of Legion Field as having 'historical significance'.  
Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: It was noted that Legion Field has been sinking forever and that it continues to 'sink'.

Chairman Clarke asked for a vote on the motion.  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**Adjournment**

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn at 7:55 PM.  
Mr. Matheson seconded.

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Ted Clarke, Chair

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Date

Respectfully submitted, Susan DeChristoforo