

**WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room**  
**November 10th, 2009 Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Ted Clarke/Chairman, Jody Purdy-Quinlan, Joan Rotundo and Ed Walker

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jody Lehrer, Community Development Coordinator

Chairman Ted Clarke called the November 10th, 2009 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

**REPORTS**

**Town Liaison**

Ms. Lehrer reported on the proposed intersection work at Middle/Washington Streets. She said that 25% of the plan has been submitted to the Planning Department, explaining that this work consists of intersection improvements and new traffic lights.

**Legion Field/Memorial Wall Update**

Next Ms. Lehrer informed members on the proposal for the Memorial Wall at Legion Field and the King Phillip Plaque - which she noted would not be touched. She said that the road would be widened so that the inside of the curve would measure 20 ft. She took a moment to distribute copies of the plans to the members. The plans and pictures showed what was presently there as well as what it would look like with the proposed changes.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan requested that the state archeologist be notified about the proposed work and that the Town request the work be monitored, pointing out that (3) Indian bodies were buried there.

Mr. Walker quickly added that it was also the site of Weymouth's first town hall.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan moved that the WHC send a letter to Mass. Historical Commission, Attn. State Archeologist's office - requesting their oversight of the proposed work at Legion Field with the goal of preserving any historical artifacts.

Mr. Walker seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ms. Lehrer said she would research the proper name/address for this correspondence and give it to the Chairman. She then referred to the recent event she and Jim Clarke attended, commenting that those they met there would be a good resource for this info.

Ms. Lehrer went on to say that the only other item she wanted to address this evening was the letter received from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) re. Legion Field. She informed members that the CPC has hired an architect whose name is Gene Raymond.

Ms. Lehrer explained that it would be Mr. Raymond's task to submit his findings/recommendation on this project to the CPC before any major funds are expended. The cost is expected to be around \$750,000-\$1,000,000 which will include work re. the wall and the gate. The proposed project costs will be broken out by the (1) cost of concrete, (2) iron work and (3) masonry.

(Chairman Clarke told circulated the CPC letter to the members.)

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked what the restoration of Legion Field would include.

Chairman Clarke updated Ms. Purdy-Quinlan on the Board's recent action whereby they belatedly asked the CPC to include Legion Field with the request for work on the Memorial Wall, but the CPC had not done this and he expected the reason was the cost.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan told members that last Friday she spoke to students at the Hamilton School in regard to the history of Wessagusset/Indian culture. She felt that the students were very interested and responded well. She also informed members of a \$150 donation made to the Fore River Watershed Association. She planned on inviting the children to come in the Spring to Wessagusset and have them plant something there in celebration of Earth Day.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that Veterans Day 1997 was the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the \$750 purchase of the Blue Spruce that was planted at the Ralph Talbot Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre. At that time invitees included residents/veterans Joe Piper and Fran Tucci (both now deceased) and Frank Burke (present Veterans Agent) -who were representatives of 3 U.S. wars. A marker was planted that day that recognized the Weymouth Veterans of all wars. The committee has since moved the tree across the street (Libby Field), but now the trees growth has being negatively affected and this needs to be addressed.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan suggested that the Commission contact Bob O'Connor/DPW Director and request that he look into correcting the problem.

Chairman Clarke asked Ms. Purdy-Quinlan to draft a letter to Mr. O'Connor outlining the problem for his signature.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan further stated that there is a granite plaque at that location which was donated by the Town of Weymouth in recognition of the Town's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, adding that it is a tribute to the Veterans of all wars from time memoriam.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to inform members that someone wants to donate five (5) 18 ft. Blue Spruce trees. At this point she was looking for an appropriate location and asked the members for suggestions. She thought possibly placing one in each of the five villages was a good idea, with the intent that each tree would honor each of the five Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. She suggested they might also add a stone marker. In regard to the planting of the trees, she said they would require very large holes and for that they would need heavy equipment.

Chairman Clarke thought that a good location would be South Field in South Weymouth and suggested the five trees be planted in the same location.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would like to see them planted in time for the holidays so that they could be lit.

Chairman Clarke felt by planting all five trees at one location would make it easier to recognize the significance; i. e., 5 trees for the 5 Congressional Medal Award recipients.

Next Ms. Purdy-Quinlan informed members that this evening she read in the newspaper that the Town purchased two acres of property on Mutton Lane at an assessed value of \$100,000, adding that the Town received the (2) acres at about half of their market value.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan went on to say that the CPC approved \$169,000 to pay for the land and the property owner was giving \$63,000 for back taxes to the Town. She thought the site went back to 1821 - and it was her understanding that all historic items derived from this location were being donated to the Town.

It was thought that the owner could have been a teacher who taught at the Pratt School, as part of the items in the home included a schoolroom ledger. It was stated that the land would become part of the Bradford Hawes Park. It was further stated that in donating/purchasing the land in this manner it would protect the property from being developed.

Mr. Walker agreed, noting that the river runs along the side of the site. He told members that the woman who owned the property was one of the founding members of the Abigail Adams Society, adding that the house contained many antiques.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said that she met the woman in 1995 and at that point she became her mentor. She had helped her with her genealogy and now she is the recipient of some of her pictures.

Members were told that the house at one point belonged to William Rice and both his first and second wife lived there along with his daughter - a descended from Steven Cain.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan brought in old pictures that she found there for the members review. She said that the original house was built in 1818 and in 1876 her son Charles rebuilt it and the architecture of the house was Queen Anne Victorian. She noted that the barn there now was in poor condition and she was going to request that the Building Department take a look at it. She wanted to point out that the house (Louise B. Flynn's) is on the 'demo delay' list. She was not sure what was to become of it.

Mr. Walker then changed the subject and referred back to the present Town Hall and the renovation work that had been done, pointing out that things have been added which take away from its historical value of the building - specifically citing the generator adjacent to the building. He said he read up on the definition of 'Local Historic District' as well as the restrictions. He then voiced his concern about the changes that had taken place at Town Hall since it was restored and how it has affected its historic integrity,

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said to move forward in this direction to protect these buildings; they would first have to establish a Local Historical Committee, which would be separate from this Commission.

Chairman Clarke asked Mr. Walker if he was concerned about any other existing buildings in the Town and he replied 'yes', citing the Fogg Library as an example.

Mr. Walker said he believed they could address the building as being located within a district and establish one.

Chairman Clarke asked if he meant a limited district within a historic district.

Mr. Walker then cited the different historic districts; i. e., national, state, then the local historic district.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan reviewed the steps that should be taken to do create one:

- 1) establish a Local Historic District Committee
- 2) nominate a Local Historic District

Mr. Walker said he was specifically referring to Town Hall, with the Chairman commenting, "you can't use one building".

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan agreed, stating you would have to name a number of historic buildings and include Legion Field Memorial Wall.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan wanted to point out that a Local Historic District designation has teeth to protect, but then again, she said, you might receive calls in opposition because of the stringent regulations.

Chairman Clarke pointed out that they would have to be selective and that the Town Council would need to be involved in the process.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan spoke about establishing a Local Historic District and suggested that they first investigate it further before taking any action, adding that the Commission would also need to identify the district.

Chairman Clarke commented that he wasn't saying it couldn't or shouldn't be done, but he could foresee a problem doing it. He then asked Ed Walker to check on it further with the Mass. Historical Commission and report back to the Commission.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said they could possibly speak with the Mayor and the Building Department and ask them why what happened happen. She then asked if they could change what's been done referring to the location of the generator at Town Hall.

The Chairman replied that he didn't think they should pursue ancient history, once again asking Ed to report back to the members with his findings after contacting MHC.

Mr. Walker stated that at one time they wanted a generator at the Fogg Library and the Commission stepped in and put a stop to it. He then spoke about a another experience with the past Building Inspector when the plan was to vinyl side one of the school buildings (Jefferson) and the Historical Commission stepped in and with their authority disallowed it - and instead it was repainted - and the paint/school could still be seen today.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan emphasized that nothing should be done to any historical building without the appropriate parties coming before the Commission first.

Mr. Walker restated that the work was done and the past Building Inspector allowed it, voicing his concern that the Commission had not been informed.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan voiced her concern, commenting that the Commission has worked long and hard to have a say on what goes on in the Town in regard to the preservation of its historical buildings. She said whenever property of historical significance is affected; such as, town-owned historical sites; i. e., when the Mass. Highway Dept. is requested to make a curb cut in an area of historical significance - then the Ma. Historical Commission (MHC) can be contacted for their input.

Mr. Walker said he would like the members to contact the MHC before they vote on this (Local Historic District), with the Chairman responding 'we are'.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan next questioned the status of the house on Cottage Street, owned by Weymouth Bank. It was noted that they had met with the Commission some weeks back regarding the bank's request to demolish it. She asked why the bank didn't buy a portion of the parking lot for its customers parking needs and preserve the house. She also wanted to point out that no one parks along that entire area of Broad Street, which she thought was another option. She told members that she planned to write something about the Cottage Street property and the bank.

Chairman Clarke said that this idea (re. use of the parking lot) was suggested to the bank's representatives but they weren't open to it. He further stated that it was noted that the bank's customers park in the Methodist Church parking lot now.

On a separate subject, Ms. Lehrer said that she has provided an informational report on ???? to the MHC and gave a copy to the CPC, as they provided the funding. She wanted to stress that she made it clear to them that this information was 'confidential' could not be released to the public, adding that the report would be made available to the Commission members only. She also wanted to note that the location was confidential - and included the comment 'please don't dig them up'. Lastly she wanted to report that she had one more item from the MHC, stating that Pond Street/Fulton School would be considered by the MHC.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Clarke informed members that he would be giving a 'talk' on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM on his book 'The History of Weymouth' at the Tufts Library - all were invited.

Mr. Walker asked about the status of Tufts Library, stating that the Commission has asked/sent letters to the Fogg Library Committee asking that the Commission be kept updated on their actions by sending them a copy of the minutes of their meetings, yet they still have not received them. He said he would like to make that request again which would include that the Fogg Library Committee send a copy of their minutes to the Historical Commission members. He felt that they were being kept in the dark regarding the future use of the library - and he was very concerned about it. Further it was his understanding that they have had another meeting since they met with them and he would like to see a copy of those minutes.

Ms. Lehrer offered to check on the meeting minutes for him.

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM.

Motion seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

The Historical Commission will meet again on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**Adjournment**

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

Mr. Matheson seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

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Ted Clarke, Chair

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Date

Respectfully submitted, Susan DeChristoforo

Recording Secretary