

**WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Weymouth Town Hall - Kelly Room**  
**December 8th, 2009 Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Ted Clarke/Chairman, Mary Dorey, Ed Walker, Don Matheson, Phil Smith and Jody Purdy-Quinlan arrived at 7:10.

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

**Chairman**

Chairman Ted Clarke called the December 8th, 2009 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Clarke informed members that he received a letter from Atty. Greg Galvin, attorney for Ken Ryder of Ryder Development. The letter informed him that Mr. Ryder has made a request to demolish the dwelling located at 419 Summer Street.

Ms. Lehrer commented that she also had some information on that topic.

**Reports**

**Town Liaison**

At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan arrived and stated she only had a short time to meet with the members this evening as she had a prior commitment - but she wanted to address recent news about 43 Bicknell Road. She said she received a letter from Gale Evans, the owner of the property, who has been given permission to release the research information on the site. She noted that the archeologist's report shows that the skulls are still in the walls and have never been removed. Based on this report she planned to move forward, adding that the archeologist would be working with her. She said she wanted to 'take it to the street'. She noted that she had also received an article about something similar; i. e., a skull that was found and identified to be from a person who served in the Civil War and that it had been moved to a new grave and received military honors in the process. She planned to put her information re. 43 Bicknell in writing. Once this was done she would move forward with the Wessagusset story and then make a 10-minute short film on it. She also planned to put together all the info she has acquired in a '1-pager', adding that she has the script all written. She told members that she was excited to finally have this documented.

It was noted that the report is more involved and that Ed Bell of the state has recommended that the skulls be treated separately.

Ms. Lehrer spoke next stating that what she read in the report was that they could 'not' specifically identify the skulls.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan replied that was not what she understood, pointing out that the report doesn't dispute they are there.

Ms. Lehrer informed Ms. Purdy-Quinlan and the members that she personally spoke with a representative of the Mass. Historical Commission who didn't see it quite the way Ms. Purdy-Quinlan did.

Ms. Lehrer noted that the anomalies discovered were not determined to be skulls and no evidence existed to say that they were, in fact, skulls. Ms. Lehrer told members that they said right now there is no conclusive proof the skulls are there and based on this report she felt Ms. Purdy-Quinlan was making an assumption.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan responded that oral history points to facts that there are five (5) skulls there, again, that was her understanding - adding, unless it could be disproved.

Chairman Clarke told Ms. Purdy-Quinlan that wasn't how history works, emphasizing that you would need to prove that there were (5) skulls there; but he added, in reference to your story for your proposed film you could run with that.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that Barbara Donahue's report states that history points in the direction that this story is the truth.

Chairman Clarke noted that it was also in the report that it was not clear where the first settlement was located, so at this point they were still a long way from knowing.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that the point was they have documents that recognize the Wessagusset situation, which is similar to Plymouth's - explaining you can't dig up artifacts to prove the story is wrong. She went on to say that as far as she was concerned the report gives Wessagusset validity adding that she was proud of the work we did by having this done and I'm looking forward to making the film.

(At this point Ms. Purdy-Quinlan left for a prior commitment.)

## **Minutes**

- a. **September**
- b. **October**
- c. **November**

Chairman Clarke noted that they had three sets of minutes that needed to be approved; i. e., September, October and November of 2009.

Mr. Walker moved to approve the minutes of the following meetings - September 8, 2009, October 13, 2009 and November 10, 2009 as amended.

Seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Next Chairman Clarke referred to Jody Purdy-Quinlan's comments stating that the report was sent to the members on DVD, which although it was long it was well-done with graphics. He then noted that in some areas there were certain drawings that were accompanied by no conclusions.

Mr. Smith asked who did the report and the Chairman told him it was done by Barbara Donahue, with the Town paying for the report/research through the Community Preservation Committee. He further explained that the funding actually was approved by the CPC and eventually by the Town Council.

Ms. Lehrer wanted to note for the record that Ms. Purdy-Quinlan's interpretation of the report was entirely different from that of the Department of Planning and Community Development and the MHC.

Mr. Walker interjected that if in the future they started to demo the property and found the skulls they would have to stop.

She reaffirmed that the report did not say anything about finding the skulls. She said that if the report had concluded that skulls were there or any other remains, the site would have quite a bit of protection and the report on 43 Bicknell would not have been able to be released per the MHC. She stated that, in fact, other than the demolition delay list, there would be no additional protection afforded to the site.

The report would not have been public because the MHC would have wanted to prevent outsiders from trying to dig up the remains.

Chairman Clarke commented that the report doesn't really document what Ms. Purdy-Quinlan would like it to say.

Ms. Dorey referred to '43 Bicknell' noting that it was on the Demo Delay list - and asked 'if it comes up can we put in the stipulation that if they find anything they would be required to stop work immediately?'

Ms. Lehrer replied that under the law they must stop if the site is determined to have human remains.

Chairman Clarke told members that he sent a letter to the state archeologist, who directed him to the MHD Office of Cultural Affairs and this person told him that he was aware of the sensitivity of the area.

### **Rte. 53 Widening**

#### **South Shore Hospital Expansion**

Ms. Lehrer reported that the Hospital notified the MHC that there will be an addition at 55 Fogg Road - and MHC wanted the Weymouth Historical Commission to know about it. The MHC said they didn't believe it would have any adverse impacts. She explained that the proposed work would take place in the vicinity of 38 Fogg Road/Doctor Clifford Danford House, Columbian Square.

Mr. Walker asked about the stone/granite wall that goes around the South Shore Hospital and Mr. Smith said that it had been all dug up and removed and relocated back on Main Street, pointing out that it was not destroyed.

### **Fogg Library**

Ms. Lehrer told members that the Columbian Square Merchants had a tree lighting ceremony this past weekend and the Fogg Library building was opened and pictures were taken. Tomorrow (12/9) they will pre-qualify contractors for the exterior work that is scheduled to take place in the Spring.

Ms. Lehrer went on to refer to the proposed work for the interior of the Library, informing members that the Fogg Library Building Committee would be meeting in January and the minutes of their meeting will be posted by their secretary (Lee Hultin of the Mayor's office) on the Town's website.

### **Legion Field Update**

Next Ms. Lehrer reported that the request for funding for the proposed work re. Legion Fields' gate and memorial wall have been taken under advisement by the CPC.

Mr. Matheson (the Commission's representative on the CPC) clarified that the CPC is just interested in funding the work on the Memorial Wall.

**Other****Fulton School Conversion**

Ms. Lehrer told the members that the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Fulton School Condominiums was held today - and there was a verbal thank you acknowledging the Commission's efforts.

Ms. Lehrer further noted that this school/site was nominated to go on the list re. the Historical Register - and this will come before the MHC tomorrow - she planned to be there. She noted that Rita Walsh was the consultant who did the research. She told members that at the Open House there were pictures of Alice Fulton and plans are to also have the historical plaque placed inside the building.

Chairman Clarke questioned the promptness of the nomination and Ms. Lehrer offered to get this information for him.

**Town Hall Update**

Ms. Lehrer informed Mr. Walker and the members that based on their prior comments/concerns about the placement of the generator being visually exposed outside of (historic) town hall - plans are now to plant evergreens that will go around the generator and camouflage it.

**Clapp Building**

Re. Weymouth Landing/Meeting House - Ms. Lehrer did not have any new news, but quickly added the timetable has it more than one year away.

**Ken Ryder/Ryder Development Proposal**

Ms. Lehrer reported that developer Ken Ryder and his attorney Greg Galvin have a request in to demolish the house located at 419 Summer Street. It was noted that this house was not on the Demo Delay list so Mr. Ryder is not required to appear before the Commission. She said she knew the members are looking to expand the Demo Delay list, but at this point in time she has been very busy and she will address it when time allows. She then distributed pictures of the Summer Street site to the members. She explained that his lawyer's letter states that Mr. Ryder would like to purchase the property and demolish the structure, replacing it with a new single-family dwelling.

**Contributions**

Ms. Lehrer then spoke about calls/contributions she has received regarding people who wanted to make historical contributions. They included the following:

- 1) Town of Weymouth 1895 Annual Town Report
- 2) Mr. Ed Winnott/Whitman sent a letter about his aunt Gertrude Tirrell Bates. Her child Vernice Mary Bates (recently deceased) cleaned her mother's house and found her mother's class picture - she was part of Weymouth High School Class of 1932 and wanted to donate the picture to the Town.

Chairman Clarke noted that the Commission would need to decide where they are going to store them.

Ms. Lehrer said they could temporarily store them in Planning.

Members discussed purchasing a locked case specifically built for historical artifacts.

It was agreed that first Ms. Lehrer would check on the availability of funds and Phil Smith will also look into one from the Museum of National Heritage.

Additionally Mr. Walker will speak with Joan LaMothe, Library Director for information on these types of cabinets.

Chairman Clarke felt they would need (2) cases - one for document storage and the other to be used as a display case.

#### **Don Matheson/CDC Designee, Map of North Weymouth**

Mr. Matheson updated members on the action taken by the CPC, stating their last meeting was very brief and he had nothing new to report. Next he passed out copies of maps to each member. He explained that one of the maps was dated 1622 and it was marked with different letters that designated different historical areas in the Town.

In reviewing the map, Mr. Walker told members that a hotel was previously located at Ft. Point Rd./River St.

Mr. Matheson then showed a larger version of the plan which he created and it included the history of Weymouth/dates/old houses and where they were located. He said he would like to make up about 50 copies for the residents. He then referred to a framed map that he created that showed Lovell Beach, the Quincy Shipyard and the Town of Braintree.

Mr. Smith noted that the date was 1885 - and it was noted that this was before Watson made the 'swing' bridge.

It was also noted that resident Thomas Lawson built the only 7-mastered schooner in the world.

Mr. Matheson referred to the map dated 1890, informing members that the North Weymouth Land Co. purchased all the land on the south side of Bridge Street - land by the Wessagusset Yacht Club. He added that at that time the steamship(s) would come into the hotel's landing that way and a horse/buggy would pick up the people from the boat and take them out to the various developments. It was also noted that house lots were sold there in the early 1920's.

The Chairman added that people also 'summered' at Fort Point at that time.

Mr. Matheson noted that one map show the CP Graves Shoe Factory, which was located there around 1900.

Chairman Clarke informed the commission members that Mr. Matheson created the pamphlet about 6-7 years ago, adding he would like to look into using some of the power plant money to fund the printing of the pamphlets. He commented that this expense was supposed to be taken care of years ago by the Town but it never came to fruition (for Lovell's Grove).

Mr. Walker asked Ms. Lehrer to ask Jim Clarke where the Commission stood in regard to the guard house located at the entrance to the power plant (where the Welcome to Weymouth sign is located) - the access road to the power plant.

Chairman Clarke asked about how they could use the funds if could have it - suggesting possibly a museum.

Ms. Dorey told members that she spoke to Victor Pappas a couple of years ago and they spoke about using it for a Chamber of Commerce - and he thought that was a great idea.

Mr. Matheson informed the Commission that he had collected quite a bit of information during his research of North Weymouth. Further he said that he spoke with John Peruzzi who asked him (the Commission) if they could do something about preserving Great Hill, because of it being a place of historical significance. Mr. Matheson thought if he and Jim Clarke combined all of their information/research, he felt it would be a worthwhile pursuit; it would validate the importance of the Hill designating it as a historical site.

Ms. Lehrer referred Mr. Matheson to Bob Luongo in the Planning Office, who was the CPC spokesperson. She said he should let him know about this idea, but quickly pointed out the request would need to be accompanied by some information/documentation that would validate its historical significance.

Mr. Walker noted that during WWII it was a gunnery place.

Chairman Clarke told members that he was on the MHC website and found that they have a 1-disc DVD available re. info on historical sites. He researched the viability of a single building qualifying as a historical designation and the answer was 'yes', adding that the City of Somerville has one. He noted that the website offers the disc and he recommended that the members get one. He went on to say that he planned on meeting with Mayor Kay on this subject to discuss it further, noting that the Mayor and the Town Council would need to be involved in the process. He asked Mr. Walker to accompany him.

Mr. Walker referred to the architectural preservation district, stating there is a bylaw that protects its character with specific criteria and limitations. He thought they should pursue it further in regards to Weymouth Town Hall.

Ms. Lehrer asked if he was referring to future development or what presently exists and Mr. Walker responded 'existing'. He then read from an article entitled "Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances".

Ms. Lehrer commented that she felt by taking that route it might be more 'potable'.

Chairman Clarke interjected that they were not concerned with just Town Hall and Mr. Walker agreed, but added 'this is just a start'.

Chairman Clarke next referred to the Demo Delay List, commenting that it didn't protect very much unless they had cooperation from the developers - emphasizing that they should be looking into this further. He then pointed out that they were presently doing additional work at Stetson Place. He told members that he felt it should be protected even though it was privately owned. He noted that they were putting a piece of equipment into the courtyard. He voiced his concern about missing oversight re. a lot of things of this nature and felt that they need to start acting on these types of things right away, adding we should start by first looking at the present laws (bylaws and ordinances).

Chairman Clarke noted that it was a long process and he felt it should evolve from the Mayor. He said the members need to make a decision then act.

#### **Ed Walker - MHC info on Local Historic District**

Mr. Walker said he would like to see more communication between departments, citing the installation of the generator at Town Hall as an example, as well as the work at Fogg Library - emphasizing that that one is on the National Historical Register. He further stated that if there was any further work planned for Town Hall he would like the Building Inspector to come before them first to discuss it. He voiced the same concern for the Fogg Library, stating that he would like the Commission to be involved in the process to some degree.

Ms. Lehrer commented that she didn't see what they could do differently.

Mr. Walker felt the generator actually could have gone off site, adding they were able to stop the generator at the Fogg Library when they voted against it.

Chairman Clarke wanted to point out that although they could make the request, it was not under their control.

Mr. Walker again reiterated that he felt they should have been advised up front before any action was taken.

**New Business**

Ms. Dorey referred to a recent newspaper article whereby it stated that a history teacher in Scituate offered to give six lessons about the town's history for a small fee, with the Scituate Historical Society receiving the proceeds. Enrollees were also given a one-year membership to the Society. She thought it was a good idea that they might want to think about.

Mr. Walker commented that Chester Kevitt (past/deceased Chairman of the WHC), did something similar with Weymouth School kids.

**Announcements**

**Book talk on Weymouth 12/12 2pm**

Chairman Clarke informed members that he gives his historical talks at some of the Weymouth Schools. At this point he invited members to attend his talk scheduled for December 12th, 2PM at Tufts Library.

**Next meeting 1/12//09**

**Adjournment**

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 PM and to meet again on January 12, 2010.

Mr. Matheson seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

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Ted Clarke, Chair

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Date

Respectfully submitted, Susan DeChristoforo

Recording Secretary