

WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
December 11th, 2007 Meeting
Whipple Center

PRESENT: Ted Clarke/Chairman, Mary Dorey, Tom Curtis and Steve Puleo

ABSENT: Jodi Purdy-Quinlan, Richard Pattison and Ed Walker

ALSO PRESENT: Jody Lehrer/Community Development Coordinator, Office of Planning and
Community Development

(File Note: Prior to the beginning of the official meeting members held a work session beginning at 6:35 PM with the Chairman Ted Clarke, Mary Dorey, Tom Curtis and Jody Lehrer in attendance. Once the quorum was present the official meeting began - Discussion at the 'work session' is as follows).

Work Session

Members discussed various items on the agenda until a quorum was present - with no votes were taken.

Jody Lehrer spoke about the three (3) bids received in response to the two RFP's which had been sent out for the preparation for the nomination of two historic districts in the Town of Weymouth for the National Historic Register in the Town of Weymouth; i. e., Meetinghouse Historic District and Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District.

Ms. Lehrer outlined the bids that she received as follows, along with comments on the background/experience of the bidders.

- 1) EBI Consulting/Burlington submitted by Mary Stadalnick - for the Meetinghouse Historic District only, Architectural Historian (Bid price \$12,000)
- 2) PAL/Public Archaeology Laboratory from Pawtucket, RI (Jim Clarke is familiar with them through the MBTA/Greenbush) - from Virginia Adams, Senior Historical Historian - bid on both: Meetinghouse Historic District (Bid price \$15,750) and Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District (Bid price \$21,750)
- 3) Timothy Orwig from Walpole - bid on Meetinghouse Historic District only (Bid price \$7,750)
- 4) Wendy Frontiero, RA/Beverly for Meetinghouse Historic District and Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District (total Bid price \$37,500) - the most expensive.

Ms. Lehrer then took a moment to review each company's background and experience in this particular area.

She said that in speaking with Jim Clarke about the bids, he recommended going with Timothy Orwig for Meetinghouse Historic District (\$7,750) and PAL of Pawtucket for Weymouth Landing/Front Street at \$17,000 (total price \$24,750).

When asked about the bid process, Ms. Lehrer then explained that any bids under \$25,000 can be awarded informally and did not need to be advertised. She also noted that she had sent out seven (7) bid letters to various potential applicants, along with a copy to the Mass. Historical Commission and just four (4) responded.

Ms. Lehrer then spoke about the PAL applicant, who stated in their application that they would act within one week of notice if awarded the contract. She continued to read their proposed timetable for doing the work. She said that although Mr. Clarke is in favor of giving them the Weymouth Landing/Front Street District only - if they do not agree to contract for just one of the sites, the fall back plan would be to award them both contracts.

Next Ms. Lehrer spoke about the Application for a Historical House or Building Plaque she received from John and Donnamarie Ott of 11 Lorraine Street in East Weymouth (she distributed copies of their application). The application had Items #1 and #2 checked off which claimed that the house/barn was over 100 years old and was associated with one or more historic persons or events etc. - accompanied by the written notation that it was built mid 19th century (during the Civil War) and a narrative that stated the barn was believed to be part of the underground railroad used by the slaves at that time, and also included slaves quarters/trap door under the barn. Additionally, the application included pictures of the site. Lastly it was noted on the form that they would like additional help from the Commission.

Ms. Lehrer stated that the Ott's did not have any documentation of their claim, but were told by others their property had a history, which originated over 100 years ago.

Ms. Dorey said that she knows someone who is knowledgeable about the Underground Railroad was in Weymouth and would contact that person.

Ms. Lehrer told members that both she and Jim Clarke are supportive of the plaques going to as many qualified homes/residents as possible, adding they are anxious to get the word out.

In closing discussion of this topic, Ms. Lehrer went on to say that to date they have received two plaque requests and have two more applications that are being considered.

43 Bicknell Road

Mr. Curtis informed members that he initially had a problem of getting hold of Gail Evans of 43 Bicknell Rd., but eventually did meet with her. They discussed the possibility of an archaeological survey and Ms. Evans said she would consider it. Based on that conversation he was recommending they prepare a proposal for the survey to be submitted to the CPC for consideration. He then proceeded to explain the information they would need to complete the form, which included a cost estimate. He said that Ed Bill/MHC gave him some names, which included Barbara Donohue whom he contacted. Barbara told him that she felt \$5,000/\$10,000 would be plenty. He then told members that he drafted a description for their consideration and asked that the members feel free to edit it, handing out a copy of the form.

Chairman Clarke asked if at this he felt they should go forward and Mr. Curtis replied 'yes'.

Mr. Curtis went on to say that he told Ms. Evans that they would try to keep the survey minimally invasive. He said he felt when their application for the survey came before the CPC they could ask Barbara Donohue to speak. He expected those doing the survey to quadrant off the land in 25' squares and do it a section at a time.

Chairman Clarke asked if there was any insurance for those who do it and Mr. Curtis replied 'I should think so'.

Chairman Clarke said if he was the homeowner, he might request a fee for going in.

Ms. Dorey felt it important that the land be restored.

Chairman Clarke said it there is an additional cost, then that's part of it.

(Steve Puleo arrived).

THE OFFICIAL MEETING BEGAN.

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Chairman

Chairman Clarke called the December 11th, 2007 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 6:55 PM.

43 Bicknell Street

Ms. Dorey commented that it was her understanding that 'skulls' were found in the basement wall at 43 Bicknell St. and Tom Curtis acknowledged this.

Chairman Clarke talked about the owner of the property being invited to a CPC (Community Preservation Commission) meeting and Mr. Curtis agreed.

In speaking about the funding for the survey, Mr. Curtis felt that the \$10,000 estimated cost would be valid to February 2008, but quickly added that only half of their portion of the money would go for the survey - the other half from Open Space.

Mr. Curtis moved that the Historical Commission proceed with the request for funding for an archaeological study for 43 Bicknell Street and submit the application to the CPC.

Mr. Puleo seconded

Discussion:

Mr. Puleo asked if they knew the length of time for the study and Mr. Curtis replied 'no', adding they would have to see the site first.

Mr. Curtis went on to say that the \$10,000/funding is to be used to find out what the cost estimate would be, clarifying that the \$10,000 is for the investigation only. Once the survey was completed, they would return to the CPC for additional funding for the excavation. Again he reiterated that the money would be for the 'report' only which is estimated to cost between \$5,000/\$10,000.

Chairman Clarke took Mr. Curtis' motion.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Approval of Minutes

Members agreed to table approval of the November 13th, 2007 minutes until the next meeting.

Reports:**A. Town Liaison**

Chairman Clarke noted that Ms. Lehrer spoke previously about the four groups who submitted a proposals for the establishment of two National Register Districts: the Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District and the Meetinghouse Historic District.

Ms. Lehrer stated that out of the 4 bidders, 2 submitted proposals for just the Meetinghouse Historic District and the other 2 for both the Meetinghouse Historic District and Weymouth Landing/Front Street Historic District. At this point she distributed a spreadsheet detailing the applicants/proposals.

Ms. Lehrer then recapped the bids:

PAL/Pawtucket, RI - a total of \$25,000 for both Historic Districts

EBI Consulting/Burlington - Meetinghouse only \$12,000

Tim Orwig/Walpole - Meetinghouse only \$7,750

Wendy Frontiero/Beverly, MA - both Meetinghouse and Weymouth Landing/Front \$37,500

Ms. Lehrer told members that she and Jim Clarke would like to see if PAL would separate the bid for the two sites and accept the offer to do Weymouth Landing/Front Street only for \$17,000 - and to award the Meetinghouse Historic District to Tim Orwig. At this point she distributed copies of the individual bids to the members.

Mr. Puleo asked Ms. Lehrer if she had spoken with Tim Orwig and she replied 'yes', adding he previously did a cemetery in East Rochester for the National Register Historic District. She described him as being very interested and enthusiastic about both Meetinghouse and the cemetery.

Chairman Clarke asked why Jim Clarke recommended two bidders and Ms. Lehrer said it was Jim's intent to bring in some new talent.

Mr. Puleo noted that his resume said he has completed 15 National Register projects, with the East Rochester Church and cemetery being the most recent.

Mr. Curtis moved to award the National Historic Register project for the Meetinghouse District to Tim Orwig for \$7,750 and to award the National Historic Register Project for Weymouth Landing/Front Street to PAL for \$17,000 - and if PAL won't segregate the double bid, to give both contracts to PAL.

Mr. Puleo seconded the motion for purposes of discussion.

Discussion: Mr. Puleo stated that he wouldn't support that motion. He said he would support Jim Clarke's recommendation as proposed, but would not give the second option to PAL to have him do both sites if he rejects doing the Landing site only.

Mr. Puleo asked Mr. Curtis if he would accept an amendment to his motion and that would be that to offer PAL 'only' the Weymouth Landing/Front Street project only.

Mr. Curtis accepted Mr. Puleo's amendment.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Members discussed a backup plan - if PAL does not accept the single contract for the Landing. They spoke about giving PAL the option of doing both for a total cost of \$20,000 - and if this comes to fruition, then Jody Lehrer will not have to come back to the Commission for further approval/discussion on the matter.

Ms. Lehrer said the possibility might arise that they might have to send all bids back out.

Ms. Dorey commented that Tim Orwig offered an timely and attractive timeline.

Ms. Lehrer stated that they still had the option of going with Tom Orwig and then they could rebid the other component.

Status of Plaques.

Ms. Lehrer commented that the members talked about plaques earlier and she noted that they received an application from the Ott's at 11 Lorraine Street (she distributed the form to the members). She described the house having a barn adjacent to it - and they were constructed in 'mid-century'. The owners think the property is part of the slaves' Underground Railroad.

During this conversation, the members also spoke about reconsidering the criteria for the historical plaques by being less stringent. She commented that there has been discussion that if the house/structure is over a certain age it should qualify.

The Chairman suggested discussing this further at a future meeting, giving members additional time to think about it.

Wessagusset Memorial Garden Grant Application

Ms. Lehrer told members that she put together a grant application for Wessagusset Memorial Garden.

Chairman Clarke noted that Ms. Purdy-Quinlan said she would send information on this but this did not happen.

Ms. Lehrer stated that grant is for \$10,000 and Jim Clarke didn't feel the proposed work would amount to that.

Chairman Clarke commented that if they add a designation it might. He suggested a designation at Abigail Adams Park that would address the Miles Standish/Indian altercation and would stay within the time line.

Mr. Curtis interjected that his apprehension about the grant is that they have not set aside any money for maintenance. As an example he cited Abigail Adams Park which he said was a mess and needed to be cleaned up, adding he didn't see that at Wessagusset Memorial.

Mary Dorey spoke about involving students in the process- possibly with some of their artwork.

Chairman Clarke told members that he liked Mary's notion of involving students, conducting some type of contest and offering a \$10,000 scholarship. He added "it's just a thought".

Ms. Lehrer wanted to point out that the grant was due this Friday, December 14th and she didn't know if they could make the deadline with this additional info - as they would now need to change the scope. She said they originally wanted it nominated as a historical site for the National Historic Register - but there wasn't enough money. She said she prepared the grant at the Commission's request and then gave out a handout entitled "2008 Letter of Intent to Apply for Survey & Planning Funds" for their review/comments. She explained that the grant is a 40%/60% split with \$3500 being the local share along with \$500 for in-kind services. She said they can apply for \$6,000 through MHC (for consultant to prepare the papers).

Chairman Clarke asked if they submit the form, what happens next?

Ms. Lehrer told him if it is approved then they invite you to submit a 'full' application, but quickly added she didn't think they would qualify.

Chairman Clarke asked "how about if we add the word UPGRADE"?

Ms. Lehrer said they would need some additional language.

At this point the Chairman offered to email her some additional language.

Mr. Puleo asked how the stones and plaque look now and Ms. Lehrer responded that some have handprints and most are in good condition.

Ms. Dorey interjected that the handprints are from the school kids.

Chairman Clarke suggested pictorial scenes, possibly a drawing.

Ms. Lehrer suggested "Installation of a Pictorial History".

Chairman Clarke suggested they use that as a general term and members agreed.

It was agreed that Chairman Clarke would send along some additional language to be included in the grant.

Ms. Lehrer stated that the funding would be used for physical implementation and some kind of contest could be introduced for pictorial enhancement.

Other Business

Ms. Lehrer told members that she has discovered through a vital record search that some websites have access to historical records for a small fee - like \$70. She said that she came across some with historical information about Weymouth/Wessagusset. She explained that the fee allows you access to this type of information.

Chairman Clarke thought they had some money in their fund that they obtained through the sale of videotapes that Mr. Pattison set up - and it might be used for this purpose.

Ms. Lehrer will look into this.

Adjournment

Mr. Curtis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 PM.

Ms. Dorey seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Ted Clarke, Chairman

Date

(File Note: Members left to attend a Planning Board meeting at the Whipple Center that would be addressing the redevelopment of the Clapp Memorial Building in South Weymouth.)