

## **DUXBURY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Minutes: January 21, 2015**

**Present:** members Robert C. (Terry) Vose, R. Tag Carpenter, Robb D'Ambruoso, Arthur Evans, Chris Tice, and Leslie Lawrence, constituting a quorum. Nicole Walters was absent.

*Note: numbering below is chronological, and does not necessarily correspond to agenda-item numbering.*

Mr. Vose called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Review of Minutes. Minutes for the December 17, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Myles Standish Cemetery. Chm. Vose noted that the Cemetery has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, the 16<sup>th</sup> such location in Duxbury. The Commission briefly discussed, including the fact that 800-1,000 are buried there yet less than 200 graves are marked.
3. Plymouth 400th Anniversary Preparations. Chm. Vose, a member of the 400th Anniversary Commission remarked on the scale of preparations that Plymouth is undertaking, and the small amount of lodging in Duxbury. Mr. Vose noted that the Commission appointed officers, and the meetings will be monthly for the near term.
4. Public Hearing. 184 Standish St. (Complete Demolition, 1800). Eric Pontiff (builder and owner) appeared.
  - Mr. Pontiff noted the following deficiencies vis-à-vis current regulations, that motivate the demolition: ceilings less than 7 feet high, rotted rear face of structure due to water flow, termite damage, and mold, all of which would need to be addressed upon a substantial (> 50% of structure's value) renovation, at considerable expense. Mr. Pontiff also noted that he had made efforts to find a party to take and preserve the structure. He also opined that any renovation would require such structural changes that the house's historical nature would be fundamentally changed. He expressed dismay that he was only now having a hearing based on an October demolition application, misunderstanding that the 6-month delay period began tolling on the date of such filing, and noted the financial hardship associated with carrying the cost of two homes (he owns a Bow Lane residence in Duxbury). He also expressed his opinion that the Commission did not adhere to the statutory timeline in his application.
  - The Commission discussed the merits of preserving the house, and acknowledged the financial hardship to the applicant. In response to a question from Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Pontiff believed that 50% of the value of the structure is \$100,000, an amount which would easily be exceeded by a significant renovation. Mr. Carpenter asked Mr. Pontiff if he intended to demolish the structure when he purchased it in summer 2014, and Mr. Pontiff said that he was unsure at the time whether he would renovate, relocate, or demolish the structure.
  - Abigail Forest, of 195 Standish Street (across street) attended the meeting, and said that she would be sad to see the house go, particularly if it were to be replaced with a "McMansion."

*Mr. D'Ambruoso left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.*

5. Demolition Applications. 259 King Caesar. Mr. Dahlen attended. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Commission voted 3-2 that the property is not historically significant and there should be no further demolition delay.
6. Alternatives to Demolition.
  - a. 11 Sagamore Road – *Total Demolition, 1926*. No activity. Suggestion made to post availability of the structure on Facebook with owner's permission.
  - b. 49 Soule Ave – *Complete Demolition, 1757*. Mr. Vose noted that he contacted owner Ann Dunlop to try to schedule a meeting to discuss alternatives without success, and will try sending a letter to the owner's Virginia address, and also try reaching out to the other listed property owner.
7. Demolition Applications
  - a. 1396 Tremont Street (Partial Demolition, 1939).
    - i. Zoning Enforcement officer had approved the demolition
    - ii. Suggestion to document the circumstance and express our concern, copying Town Manager
    - iii. Extensive discussion of bylaw "total or substantial" and "destroying" etc.
    - iv. The work is not substantial – obvious in this case.
    - v. Commissioner Lawrence raises the concern that a precedent is being set and the process will become out of control.
    - vi. If there was an approval from Zoning Enforcement, and then it turned out there was a larger project, we would have a problem.
  - b. 105 Standish Street (Relocation with Partial Demolition, ca. 1810).
    - i. Deed research not provided. Application is not complete.
    - ii. Property owner wants to proceed with demolition of non-historic portions (garage and connector).
    - iii. Commissioner Lawrence raises question of opening the historic structure to the weather.
    - iv. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Commission unanimously (5-0) voted to Instruct Zoning Enforcement officer that demolition of non-historic portions may proceed prior to a full ruling.
    - v. Incomplete application, rescheduled to 2/18
  - c. 46 Winsor Street (Complete Demolition, 1935). Incomplete application, rescheduled to 2/18.
8. Conservation Commission: 654 Washington Street (Bluefish river Pier).
  - a. At 8:52 PM Chairman Vose recused himself.
  - b. Suggested edits to draft letter:
    - i. We, the members of ...

- ii. Strike “our” and replace with Duxbury “On Duxbury’s Old Shipbuilders...”
    - iii. Strike “It Shows” and replace with “The District identifies”
    - iv. Strike “around-the-world” and replace with “world famous”
    - v. Rework P.3 to emphasize the District and the relationship to the site.
  - c. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Commission determined to draft a letter to the Conservation Commission regarding the proposed pier construction at 685 Washington Street.
  - d. Chairman Vose Returns 8:55
9. Public Outreach Planning: Brochures, Activities - Tabled
  10. Criteria for Determining Historic Significance - Tabled
  11. Revisions to Demolition Delay Bylaw - Tabled
  12. List of Infractions - Tabled
  13. Plymouth 400th Anniversary Preparations
    - a. RCV: “Massive”... staggering amount of preparation
    - b. Duxbury Committee had first meeting
      - i. Monty Healy - Chairman
      - ii. Karen Bellingham Wehner – Vice Chair
      - iii. David Madigan – Financial Officer
      - iv. Terry Reiber - Clerk
  14. Community Preservation Committee
    - a. Fincom meeting tomorrow night
  15. National Register Shipbuilders District – Status Update
    - a. New survey additions Cove Street and some portion of Cedar Street and St. George Street
  16. Local Historic District – Status Update
    - a. Last meeting rescheduled due to holiday notification problem
  17. Duxbury Online Historic Archives – Status Update
    - a. Scanner has been received
    - b. Working session scheduled for February 5th
    - c. Pam Smith posted a request for volunteers
  18. New Business
    - a. Discussion of meeting scheduling twice per month
    - b. First Wednesday and Third Wednesday of the month, starting March 4th

19. The next meeting was scheduled for February 18, 2015, 7:00 p.m. (regular meeting).
20. The meeting was adjourned upon a motion, seconded and unanimously approved, at 9:11 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Robb D'Ambruoso, Clerk.

**APPROVED March 4, 2015**