



**Mayor  
Charles C. Kokoros**

## Department of Planning and Community Development

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### Historical Commission

Ronald Frazier, Vice Chair  
Santina Giannino, Member  
Robert Harris, Member  
Kate Nedelman Herbst, Member  
Rayna Rubin, Member

Braintree Historical Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 5, 2023, 5:30 P.M., Via ZOOM

Members Present:

Ronald F. Frazier, Acting Chair  
Bob Harris, Member  
Rayna Rubin, Member  
Santina Giannino, Member

Also in Attendance:  
Melissa SantucciRozzi, Director, Planning and Community Department

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by Acting Chair Frazier.

Ms. SantucciRozzi called the roll:  
Member Frazier - here; Member Giannino - here; Member Harris – here; Member Rubin – here.  
She noted that Member Herbst was absent.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### Fire Station Renovation Update

Ms. SantucciRozzi informed the Commission that she had contacted former Historic Commission member Liz Meese. Because she is an historic architect, her input is most valuable. Ms. Meese indicated she would be delighted to help review the documents presented for the Fire Station renovations, and the Director forwarded to her the consultant's May presentation to the Commission as well as a number of old photos of the Fire Station building provided by Mr. Frazier.

The Director informed the Commission that she held a meeting with the consultant's project manager to go through the drawings. Liz Manning, CPC Coordinator, was also in attendance. The main issues to be considered were windows, main entry, roof, and lighting. The Director said she emphasized to the consultant the requirements of the Historic District and the absolute necessity of bringing back as many of the building's historic elements as possible. She made it clear that the building is an historic structure in an historic district, and all sides of the building should receive equal attention and treatment in the quality of materials used. The proposal for the main entrance was unacceptable and must be redesigned to restore as much of its historic character as possible, i.e. no change whatsoever to the window design should be considered.

The Director suggested to the Commissioners that it seemed the consultant was not so much concerned with restoring the historic character of the building as she was in considering the budget and future maintenance. The Director was firm in conveying to the consultant that the Historical Commission is not concerned with building maintenance. That is the responsibility of the Town of Braintree. The Commission's primary responsibility is to ensure as much as possible that the historic character of the building is in keeping with the dictates of the Historic District.

The Director noted that a renovated Fire Department building can be a showplace for the entry to the Town and an anchor for the Historic District. [A short side discussion took place regarding how changes had been made to the building in the past, with Mr. Frazier indicating it might have had something to do with the change in government in 2008. A considerable amount of time elapsed with no Historical Commission being appointed.

Mr. Harris wished clarification on the gutters and downspouts. The Director replied that the original material of these exterior elements was most probably copper. She has emphasized to the consultant that gutter and downspout replacements must be copper. She also informed the members that she had emphasized to the consultant that their suggestion of material for the gutters and downspouts [like in Andover] is unacceptable.

A short discussion ensued regarding the roof, which is now leaking. When was the slate replaced with the current material? What would have been the warranty? The Director wants the replacement roof to be slate and has done some investigation. When a public hearing is scheduled, Ms. Meese will attend and a discussion about materials will take place.

Ms. SantucciRozzi wants to get the project manager to submit an application. She will reach out for potential dates to for the Historical Commission to meet in summer.

#### Great Oak – Discussion on Scheduling a Daytime Visit

The consultant is not available in evening. After considerable discussion regarding the availability of the consultant, it was agreed that a date would be proposed and individuals could indicate their availability.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

#### Approval of Minutes

January 9, 2023 [Mr. Harris was not in attendance.]

No changes were needed. Motion by Ms. Giannino to accept the January 9, 2023 minutes; second by Ms. Rubin; all were in favor.

March 6, 2023 [Ms. Giannino was not in attendance.]

No changes were needed. Motion by Ms. Rubin to accept the March 6, 2023 minutes; second by Mr. Harris; all were in favor.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### Master Plan Road Show Presentation and Discussion

The Master Plan Steering Committee [MPSC] in conjunction with the Consultant Team has developed a list of strategies for the Master Plan. Now the MPSC is engaging with boards, committees, civic organizations, and Braintree residents in general to consider these strategies [Phase III]. Phase IV will be creating the actual document, the Master Plan.

Over the past months the MPSC met with focus groups and forum attendees, conducted surveys, held "meetings-in-a-box" and received "crowd map submissions." In all, these activities resulted in 2,267 "participation points." [input from various groups]. Ms. SantucciRozzi addressed the Commission and reviewed with them the "Road Show" presentation.

#### *Draft Vision & Goals Organization*

The Master Plan Website offers the following information:

- Existing Conditions Report
- Aggregated Community Engagement Summary
- Vision & Core Themes
- Draft Strategies List
- Technical Working Sessions Strategy List
- Materials from past Master Plan Committee Meetings

In ten years [2033] the MPSC envisions that Braintree will be: a well-run family-centered suburban community of residential neighborhoods, high quality public schools and recreational facilities, and an abundance of open space. The Town will be rich in historic buildings and natural resources where businesses will thrive. Braintree's leaders will collaborate with residents to plan for economic growth and to ensure sound fiscal health.

Ms. SantucciRozzi noted the core themes that the community must consider are conservation, preservation and sustainability, economic growth, transportation, housing, and public facilities. The strategies being considered by the MPSC relate to capital improvements, local initiatives, planning, policies, and zoning as well as capacity, education, and coordination. Tonight, the Historical Commission will discuss and rate the criteria for the strategies. Ms. SantucciRozzi will be the facilitator and Ms. Rubin will transcribe.

The strategies to be considered are:

1. L Work with the Braintree Historical Society to expand the existing Walk Boston Historic Walking Route and Map to include visible trail markings as well as an online platform to host self-guided audio tours and additional information on historic resources.

*In response to Mr. Frazier's query as to how Braintree relates to Boston, Ms. SantucciRozzi explained that Walk Boston is an organization which has done a walking map for Braintree. This strategy would provide an opportunity for them to design historic tours in Braintree. If the Historical Commission feels the community would be interested in this, it can be so indicated in the report to the consultant.*

***Straw Poll Vote for support: 1 voted "1"/1 voted "4"/2 voted "5"; for priority: 1 voted "1"/2 voted "3"/1 voted "4".***

***It was the consensus that more was needed to attract people to the Town to visit historic buildings and to appreciate its history.***

1. T Consider amending the Demolition Delay Ordinance (Chapter 5.700) for historic resources to extend the delay period from the existing four months to 24 months and the enforcement of non-compliance period from eight months to 48 months.

*This strategy prompted animated discussion with members of the commission focusing on the proposed timeframes and perceived lack of enforcement. Members felt that the ordinance itself should be tightened up, that enforcement is questionable, that perhaps Building Permits are issued without consideration for the*

requirements of the Ordinance. Mr. Frazier is aware of homes where one room or one wall was left standing, and the rest of the structure torn down. He feels it is important to replace the word "partial" with a percentage of a structure which would remain.

Ms. SantucciRozzi responded if the goal of the Ordinance is to attempt to promote reuse of historic structures, the current delay period of four months is not long enough, twelve months is more the common timeframe.

**Straw Poll Vote for support: 1 voted "4"/3 voted "5"; for priority: 1 voted "4"/3 voted "5".**

**Consensus was to indicate the timeframe to extend the delay period to six to nine months.**

1. U Consider adopting a zoning amendment to add an Historic Preservation Special Permit process to offer flexibility in use and/or dimensional requirements to incentivize the preservation and reuse of historic resources

Discussion included incentivizing homeowners to keep structures, rather than take down, defining who determines a structure is historic [only those in the Historic District?], setting up criteria like in the Landing. All members voted "5" to support and to prioritize, with the feeling that is necessary to establish criteria for age of historic resource as well as significance.

1. X Consider increasing the Community Preservation Act surcharge, which is currently 1 percent, to fund the Town's open space, recreation, historic preservation, and community housing goals

There was no interest in pursuing this strategy.

All members voted "1 for both supporting and prioritizing this strategy."

1. Z Consider expanding the Planning and Community Development Department to include a Sustainability Director and Historic Preservation Planner to advance the Town's environmental and historic preservation goals

Mr. Frazier lamented that so much of historic value in the Town has already been lost.

All members voted "5" to support and to prioritize 1 voted "4" while 3 voted "5".

1. DD Develop an Arts & Culture Brochure and Braintree/Weymouth Landing District page on the Town Website to increase awareness of community organizations

**Straw Poll Vote for both support and priority: All voted "5".**

1. ii Create and maintain an updated Community Preservation Plan that identifies goals and priorities for Community Preservation Act funding

The opinion was that outreach was already sufficient, but there is not enough publicity for CPC activities.

Ms. SantucciRozzi stated that the Town needs to create a new position for an individual to communicate with the public.

**Straw Poll Vote for both support and priority: All voted "5".**

4. P Study potential benefits of revising residential dimensional standards to match historical development patterns of existing neighborhoods to encourage appropriately scaled new homes on vacant lots to encourage more small-scale housing options

The Commissioners were very interested in considering this preservation tool in order to maintain the character of various neighborhoods.

**Straw Poll Vote for support: 1 voted “4”/3 voted “5”; for priority: 2 voted “4”/2 voted “5”.**

5. O Create a plan to digitize and archive all Town documents to ensure consistency in methods, storage, and security.

*This elicited strong and unanimous support.*

**Straw Poll Vote for both support and priority: All voted “5”.**

5. LL Identify funding to support multi-cultural enrichment

*Over the past decade Braintree has become a community of many ethnicities. There was clear support for continuing support for multi-cultural activities.*

**Not Much Interest/Straw Poll Vote for both support and priority: “3” [1]”4”[2]”5”[1]**

At the conclusion of this discussion Ms. SantucciRozzi asked if there was anything more the Commission wished to add to the report to the consultants. Discussion ensued about encouraging more open spaces [like the redevelopment of Quincy Square], more space for passive recreation, and the opportunity to provide more open space as part of new developments.

Ms. SantucciRozzi announced that the MPSC would meet on June 22nd [2023] to discuss the results of the “Road Show”.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Giannino, seconded by Mr. Harris; all were in favor.

Meeting adjourns at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Raiss

(with L. Quinlan edits)