

**Braintree Historical Commission**  
Minutes

December 9, 2009  
Thayer Public Library

Present: Elizabeth Mees (Chair)                      Ron Frazier (V-Chair)  
          Paul Carr    Al Varraso  
          Kate Nedelman Herbst

Also present: Dr. Peter Kurzberg, Braintree School Superintendent  
                  Peter Kress, Business Manager, Braintree Public Schools  
                  Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development.

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

Minutes:

Ron Frazier noted some corrections to the minutes of 11/16/09. Al Varraso **MOTION** to accept the minutes of 11/16/09 as amended, seconded by Paul Carr – unanimously voted.

Highland School:

Dr. Kurzberg explained that the school department has submitted a Community Preservation application for funding to restore exterior portions of the older part of the Highland's school. In order for the CPA committee to review and recommend to the mayor and Town Council on the proposal; the Historical Commission must first determine if the building is historically significant. Dr. Kurzberg provided some background with another project the Hollis School that had received CPA funding in 2004 and he felt the then sitting Braintree Historical Commission had determined both buildings were historically significant however written documentation could not be found. Dr. Kurzberg noted that the Highland school will be celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and provided copies of the CPA application for members to review.

Ron Frazier noted his tenure on the current and past historical committee and it was his recollection no such vote was ever taken. He also expressed his opinion that the CPA request appears to be for maintenance not allowable for funding under CPA. Paul Carr questioned the process – Christine Stickney briefly explained the CPA process from application to approval. Paul Carr questioned if this is the beginning of all schools coming forward looking for CPA money for capital projects. Dr. Kurzberg answered that Hollis and Highland are the two oldest schools in the Town. Peter Kress added that these two building are architecturally significant he cited unique features and that they have brick façades. He added that if the Commission deems it significant then it is “marked” to be preserved as such and locks the school department in with regards to future rehabilitation.

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Kate Nedelman Herbst offered her comments relative to the Commission's efforts to develop a sustainable review bylaw and the request from the school department to preserve an aging building are similar in their efforts. Ron Frazier expressed his opinion he was not comfortable with discuss and voting on this tonight and Paul Carr concurred stating his concern with limited funds. Kate Nedelman Herbst asked the school department about their anticipated work schedule and Peter Kress responded that they would do work over the summer 2010. Paul Carr questioned the school department as to the total project cost (\$400K) and if only half is coming from the CPA where will the other funds come from and will the work be done? Peter responded with the worked planned to be done. Ron Frazier noted there are numerous building over 50 years old that if you are merely using an age as criteria that could be significant. After additional discussion on the need to move forward tonight, Kate Nedelman Herbst made a **MOTION** to take a vote to find the Highland School as historically significant, seconded by Al Varraso – vote was 3:2 (Mees, Nedelman Herbst, Varraso – in favor and Frazier, Carr - against). Dr. Kurzberg and Peter Kress thanked the members and left the meeting at 7:40 PM.

Ron Frazier expressed his displeasure with the Boards action stating we are defining what is historically significant and this building is not. Christine Stickney suggested that perhaps the commission would want to establish criteria for determining historical significance to have in place before another application is submitted. Kate Nedelman Herbst agreed historical guidelines would be helpful. Discussion turned to the proposed activities the school department is seeking CPA funding for under their application. Elizabeth Mees noted the project may not be historically significant but the building has been determined historically significant. Elizabeth will draft a letter on behalf of the commission stating their vote and concerns with the project. Paul Carr suggested that the CPA be made of aware of other projects that are coming down the line. The Commission will put on a future agenda (Jan or Feb) an effort to establish criteria.

Local Historic District:

At the last meeting members discussed moving forward with amending the district. Discussion on what properties should be included in the district moved from the headmaster's house at Thayer to the library parking lot. Christine Stickney noted the office workload may not allow for this to move forward until late January 2010. Ron Frazier suggested that the Commission may want to consider doing it in phases – first phase being Dr. Gallivan's house and the library parking lot. Christine Stickney questioned why the concern with the parking lot? Ron Frazier expressed his concern that the library could sell the lot that has the parking lot to a private developer. Christine noted that the Planning Board had issued a decision that was recorded against the title of the property with certain conditions (staff would note that the parking lot and the library were merged as one lot).

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Elm Street Cemetery:

Christine Stickney informed the Commission; Ms. Donohue adjusted her scope of services to accommodate the available funding (19K) and any additional work will require funding first to be appropriated either through CPA or some other means.

Letter to Mayor Sullivan:

Members reviewed a draft letter prepared by Elizabeth Mees relative to the old Thayer Library. Kate Nedelman Herbst MOTION to accept the letter and send it to Mayor Sullivan, seconded by Ron Frazier – unanimously voted.

Sustainable Review Bylaw:

Kate Nedelman Herbst shared with members a draft of a “sustainable bylaw” that would establish jurisdiction of the Historical Commission over the demolition of any structure that is 50 years or older – requesting a demolition delay of one year unless otherwise waived. Members discussed the six months versus one year and agreed to stay with the one year. Members also discussed the 50 year old age with a 75 year old age. Members discussed the different neighborhoods in town the ages of homes in them and what the sustainable bylaw should or should not preserve. All agreed this will take a lot of public outreach to gain support and needs a lot of preparation. Christine questioned if this will be a general ordinance or zoning ordinance. Members agreed zoning ordinance and Christine then explained the process before the Planning Board and the Town Council. Members agreed review the matter again for the January meeting for further discussion.

Schedule of Meetings 2010:

Members agreed to move their meetings to the first Monday of each month and approved the following dates:

February 1, 2010	May 3, 2010
March 1, 2010	June 7, 2010
April 5, 2010	

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Stickney,  
Director of Planning & Community Development