

Braintree Historical Commission
Minutes
April 2, 2012
Town Hall – Cahill Auditorium

Present: Elizabeth Mees (Chair) Paul Carr
Ron Frazier Al Varraso

Absent: Kate Nedelman-Herbst

Also Present: Matthew Mees – Braintree Historical Society
Christine Stickney, Director of Planning and Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

Discussion on Historical Significance:

Elizabeth reported that Ron Frazier has made a good suggestion for additional language regarding the Historical Significance policy of the Commission. Ron offered the following for inclusion:

“All political and religious organizations, by their very nature are historical: however, because they espouse views, which may be considered as being contrary to a major portion of the general population, the Historical Commission will not support the utilization of Community Preservation Act funds for religious or political organizations.”

Christine questioned if political included municipal buildings and Ron responded no that he considered those governmental buildings. Christine explained that in zoning – political – is used as political subdivisions are referred to the different levels of government, federal, state, county and local. She suggested that if governmental buildings would not be included that perhaps adding in parenthesis (excluding governmental buildings). Ron and others had no problem with this addition. A brief discussion on what was religious, educational and non-profit continued as different organizations throughout the Town.

7:15PM – Public Hearing – Amendment to Braintree Town Center Historic District

Chairwoman Mees called the hearing to order and read the legal advertisement published in the Patriot Ledger on March 16, 2012 and sent to abutters/property owners within the Local Historic District (LHD).

Paul Carr, President of the Braintree Historical Society provided a brief presentation on the properties proposed for inclusion in the LHD. The first property, 776 Washington Street, was built in 1931 as a custom home/office for Dr. John J. Gallivan by the Fallon Brothers of Quincy for a cost of \$7,500.00. Dr. Gallivan lived in the structure until 1960 and the home was purchased by Leo Flannigan a local dentist who lived in the home with his family until 2005. In 1980, when the Braintree Town Center Historic District was created, Dr. Flannigan chose not to have his property included within the district. In 2005, the Braintree Historical Society purchased the home and property. The second property is often referred to as the Wild Garden or the Mary Bean Park – an open space parcel located between the Museum and the Fire station. It is unclear why this property was not included in the original Local Historic District however with this proposal the Town has agreed to include it.

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Chair Mees asked if members any members had questions or general public. Matthew Mees representing the Braintree Historical Society noted that he was in favor of the proposal. No further comment was provided. AL Varraso **MOTION** to close the public hearing, seconded by Ron Frazier – so voted (3:0:1 – Paul Carr abstained). Ron Frazier **MOTION** to recommend approval to the Town Counsel of the enlargement of the Braintree Town Center Historic District per the proposed map and description and to provide the final report to the Town Council and Mass Historical Commission, seconded by Al Varraso – so voted (3:0:1 – Paul Carr abstained). Christine explained that the next steps will be to put the proposal together for map and amend the general bylaw to include these two properties – then submit to the Mayor’s office and subsequently to the Council for adoption.

Christine noted to members another situation that she is working with the Mass Historical Commission (MHC) regarding their MACRIS data search showing a Commercial Street Historic District – members were unaware of any other district other than the Braintree Town Center District – she will keep members informed of her inquiries.

Continued - Discussion on Historical Significance:

Members returned to their discussion. Elizabeth Mees said she would like to put this discussion over to the next meeting for all to be present and the language suggested could be incorporated into the proposal. Christine noted that it is important to be clear in the wording as to the intentions of the committee for those who work with these matters on a daily basis. Ron noted that this will be a policy rather than any bylaw or regulation and can be amended as needed by the committee. It was agreed to put the discussion on the next agenda and provide Ron’s suggested language to everyone.

Old Thayer Library:

Christine reported that to date 22 CD’s of the plans/specifications have gone out to potential bidders. Wednesday (4/4) is the bid opening for the sub-bids and in two weeks (4/19) the general bids. Last Wednesday there was a walk around with potential bidders – approximately 8-10 firms were represented. Elizabeth Mees noted this was a good response to the solicitation. Christine also reported that on Friday (3/30) the department submitted a grant application for a grant round 18 MPPF program and hopefully we will receive funding for the doors and windows.

Other – Elm Street Cemetery:

Ron Frazier reported that he has been to the cemetery recently and is concerned with things he has seen. Many of the tomb stones appear to be missing – one of major concern is Deacon Nathaniel Thayer and his wife Deliverance stone which was there in October 2011 and now is not. He also noted that a few stones have fallen over and that it appears equipment used in the cemetery has driven over it and broken some of the stones. Ron noted that the Donohue report said that the weed whackers being used may be too strong resulting in damage to the stones. In addition while he was at the cemetery, three dog walkers came through the area with their dogs and he feels it should be posted – No dogs allowed. Ron said that he has pulled together some low cost recommendations from the recent report that he feels the Cemetery Division should undertake immediately to protect the cemetery. Ron suggested that his memo be forwarded to the Department of Public Works. Christine recommended that in addition to forwarding the memo that it may be good to meet with Walter Sullivan who maintains the cemetery properties. Members discussed if he should come to a meeting – in the end it was agreed that time was important

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and that Ron would try and meet with him during the say to show his concerns – Christine will give Ron’s contact to Walter.

Christine noted that next month’s agenda she will have the previous month request for # 216 Elm Street on it for discussion.

Elizabeth Mees asked about Union School – Christine noted that the project did go \$500 over due to the some additional work that she needs to check on in the contract – the Contractor was paid the \$27K already. The project is done.

The Minutes for 3/5/12 were tabled until the next meeting.

Al Varraso **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Paul Carr – unanimously voted

Meeting adjourned at 8:20PM

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Stickney, Director
Planning and Community Development