

Braintree Historical Commission  
Minutes  
April 7, 2014  
Johnson Chambers – Braintree Town Hall

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

Also Present: Christine Stickney, Director of Planning and Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

Joint Meeting with the Commission on Disabilities (Cahill Auditorium):

Ron Frazier **MOTION** to relocate downstairs with the Council on Disability for a joint meeting seconded By Kate Nedelman Herbst – unanimously voted.

Appointment with Commission on Disability:

Barbara Tennison welcomed members and introductions were made. Christine explained that the joint meeting was to provide information and discuss Phase III proposal for Old Thayer Library (OTL) and the Exterior Assessment of Town Hall as they related to handicap accessibility of the building. On the old Thayer Project, Christine explained to all what has transpired to date with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) relative to the variance request to continue forward. The BHC presently has an application before the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for funding of an architect to begin plans for Phase III and assist the Town with making application to the Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) for a grant in January of 2015. Handouts were provided to the group of the proposal for a rear addition that would provide a staircase and a lift for access from the rear of the OTL to the first floor showing the proposal. The existing front door would be used emergency access only and this entry would be the primary entrance. Members of the COD questioned the stairs shown next to a ramp to step down to the proposed rear entry to reach the ramp and what was the depth – Christine noted the plans are concept only now and that if funded by CPC more detail set of drawings would be provided. In addition the restrooms which have to be located in the basement would be handicap accessible and may be able to be used without having to open the building for events on the grounds however that is being worked out and may change back to Town Hall. Members were shown how the restrooms are accessed and where they would be located in the lower level. Questions as to why the lower level where answered due to the small size of the building (2500 SF) and that the existing plumbing is already available in the lower level – reconfiguration of the first floor would completely change the original interior floor layout that is trying to be restored as part of the project.

On the Town Hall project, the firm selected had put together a schematic design for consideration that had the primary entrance coming from the “portico entrance” on the side of the building that would provide direct access to the first floor and the elevator located within the building for the other floors. Lynn Vaillancourt, a member of the COD participated in the preliminary discussions with the architect and provided additional comments on the discussion. COD questioned if the old ramp would be removed and Lynn responded that is being considered however it may be replaced with something different to allow for two points of access – all agreed the current ramp is not in good condition. Discussion turned to the potential for enclosing the portico and having a lift within it and stairs open to the first floor. All discussed potential pros and cons of the ramp vs the lift and past disappointment with

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what had happened at the library. All present agreed to meet again as the architects move forward with designs to have a proposal that addresses everyone's needs – Elizabeth Mees and Barbara Tennison thanked committee members for the meeting. BHC members returned to Johnson Chambers. Ron Frazier **MOTION** to return the matters on the Commission's agenda after meeting with the Commission on Disability, seconded by Kate Nedelman Herbst – Unanimously voted

Historical Inventory: Christine reported all Group 2 and 3 were given to members and are there any comments? Ron Frazier mentioned he had emailed the consultant his comments and Al Varraso asked if there was one done for the Union School – he didn't see it. Christine said she will check on it and get back to him. Members agreed to have the Consultant submit them to Mass Historical given her experience and have her attend the June meeting. Elizabeth Mees mentioned that she is meeting with the Mayor on 4/11 to discuss a few items and she mentioned this and the demolition delay ordinance. Kate Nedelman Herbst agreed it has been over two years and something needs to be done to get it moving.

The Chair asked if we can scan Electra Trish's resource book and link it into the website for the public to use. Christine will try and have that done. Paul Carr also asked about the Cochato Club and if there had been an inventory form done for that structure. He felt that and the Union school are significant enough they should have been included.

Historic Plaque Program: Since the last meeting the Chair informed members that Ron Frazier provided her again with the materials from Dedham which she forwarded to the Historical Society. Paul Carr reported that he reached out to John Pelose and Joe Moscato to see what has been accomplished. Paul Carr asked how much input from the Commission we want going forward. The Chair feels the BHC has purview and would like to see the final design - it would be a good effort to raise Town's consciousness of the demolition delay and work with the Society. Members discussed using the Town seal if appropriate and who they would need to check with for authorization.

Christine reminded members that there will be a CPA meeting that someone needs to represent the commission on for the CPA application for the Phase III design services. Elizabeth Mees said she thinks she will be able to attend. Elizabeth noted to members a web site she had seen with an interesting approach to stairs from the UK and suggested everyone take a look at it. She will try and get some additional information from the manufacturer.

Al Varraso **MOTION** to accept the minutes of 3/3/14, seconded by Kate Nedelman Herbst - Ron Frazier asked that the additional language "in compliance with the ordinance a realtor..." to paragraph one on the discussion of associate members – majority vote (KNH abstained).

Kate Nedelman **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Al Varraso – unanimously voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Stickney,  
Director Planning and Community Development