

**Joint Meeting of  
Community Preservation Committee  
and  
Historic Commission**

January 11, 2010 @ 7:30 P.M.  
Thayer Public Library

|          |                            |   |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
| Present: | <u>Historic Commission</u> | <u>Community Preservation Committee</u> |
|          | Elizabeth Mees, Chair      | Linda Raiss, Vice Chair                 |
|          | Paul Carr                  | John Dennehy                            |
|          | Kate Nedelman Herbst       | Michael Dorn                            |
|          | Al Varraso                 | Darryl Mikami                           |

The Vice Chair of the Community Preservation Committee [CPC] called the joint meeting to order at 7:40 P.M.

The purpose of the joint meeting was to discuss the Historic Commission's December 10, 2009 letter regarding the Highlands School.

The Superintendent of Schools appeared at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission to request that the Commission make a determination relative to the historic significance of the Highlands School. This determination was necessary in order for the School Department to support their application to the CPC for funding to restore elements of the school façade.

The December letter informed the CPC that the Commission voted that the building was of historic significance. However, in that same letter the Commissioners wished to inform the CPC that it was the opinion of members of the Historic Commission that many of the exterior work items listed in the proposal submitted to the CPC were actually building maintenance. The CPC had invited the Historic Commission to meet with them to discuss implications of this letter.

The Historic Commission Chair explained that the vote to deem the Highlands School of historic significance [3/2] was based on 1) the age and significance of the oldest part of the structure [not the more recent additions] and 2) whether or not the demolition of the school would be a cultural loss. It was the opinion of the Commission that it would be a loss to the community if the school were demolished.

Members of both committees participated in discussion of various issues surrounding determinations of structures of historic value to the community and the Highlands School in particular. It was the consensus of those present that the School Department's request for funding was mostly for maintenance items. [Mr. Carr also noted that the replacement windows were installed some years ago and detract from the historic character of the building.]

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Stepping down, the CPC Vice Chair noted that a similar proposal for the Hollis School had received approval from an earlier CPC and funds were appropriated by Town Meeting. The Historic Commission Chair indicated that an earlier commission made no determination as to the historic significance of that building. She and others noted that the current Commission is known as the Historic Commission, as opposed to the earlier Commission which was the Historic District Commission. The Hollis School is not in the Town's Historic District.

The discussion which followed included the vision of the Historic Commission to support funding for projects they consider of extreme historic significance: the Elm Street Cemetery, the original Thayer Library building [on the National Register], and American Legion building. In addition, the Chair explained that the Commission would like additional survey work of historic buildings done a number of years ago. The additional survey work would be part of an effort by the Commission to present to the Town Council a draft ordinance for sustainability [demolition delay]. The current national emphasis of the "green movement" for reusing and recycling sets the stage for creation and passage of an ordinance to preserve culturally significant buildings.

Mr. Mikami asked what other buildings the Commission was targeting for funding consideration [the Gallivan house in the Historic District, the Bestick House]. He added that he feels it is important for the Commission and Committee to stay in touch and to think in advance about restoration funding.

The joint meeting concluded at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Raiss