

Braintree Historical Commission
Minutes

August 26, 2009
Thayer Public Library

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

Also present: Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

This was the first meeting of the new Commission. Members were sworn in at the Mayor's office at 6:30PM before the start of the meeting.

Administrative Matters:

Christine Stickney initiated discussion since no commission officers had been chosen yet and there was a need to address some administrative matters of the Commission.

Members were provided a copy of the Article 31 from the Annual Town Meeting of 2002 in which it had been voted to amend the Historic District to read "Historical Commission". After a brief discussion the consensus was that they would continue to be called the Braintree Historical Commission. Paul Carr asked about Dr. Gallivan's home and the inclusion into the Historic District. Ron Frazier felt he may have some past information that Town Meeting voted it into the district – he will research. Christine will provide members with the Historic District map that she obtained from Mass Historical and the list of properties.

Christine passed out a copy of Chapter 189 Acts of 2005 – Section 5 (Braintree's new Mayoral Government) that described the establishment and scope of the Planning and Community Development Office. The office will serve as support staff to the Historical Commission along with the other various committees & commissions listed. Meetings notices and room reservations will be posted through the Planning & Community Development department. The selected Chair will direct staff as to the development of meeting agendas. Members agreed if there is something they want for discussion on a meeting agenda they will let the Planning and Community Development office know one week prior to the meeting. Distribution of agendas and other materials will be through email prior to the meeting.

Members discussed next their fall meeting schedule, meeting once a month on the first Wednesday of the month. Due to conflicts with September – the meeting will be later. Meetings were scheduled for 9/16/09, 10/7/09, 11/4/09 and 12/2/09 – 7PM at the Thayer Library.

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Community Preservation Act (CPA):

Christine Stickney informed members that at the request of the Mayor her department is developing a CPA application to seek funding for the hiring of a historic preservation architect to provide an assessment and cost estimate on the restoration and preservation of the original Thayer Public Library (aka Water/Sewer building). Applications are due to the CPA on September 1st. The request will be for approximately \$35,000 for historic preservation services. Al Varraso shared copies of a letter from Representative Driscoll dated 8/14/08 relative to available funds for the building. Ron Frazier provided members with information on past projects that he believes should be still funded; Elm Street Cemetery (2007) appropriated \$19,000 and the Historic Inventory Survey (2003) appropriated \$10,000. Christine informed members of what the new CPA committee is doing relative to past projects and their development of a new funding request process. For the next meeting Christine will get the status of these two projects and report back to the Commission. Al Varraso asked that staff to also look at the appropriation made for the American Legion Hall off Washington Street.

Discussion returned to the former Thayer Library and what should be done with the exterior and interior. Kate Nedelman Herbst asked Christine as to the Mayor's intention for use of the space and she explained at this time she does not know details but that he would like to see community meeting space. Christine asked the committee to consider support of the funding request. Al Varraso **MOTION** to recommend favorable support of the Community Preservation application for the former Thayer Public Library, seconded by Nedelman Herbst – unanimously voted. Members expressed their desire to visit the building and Christine agreed to coordinate with Tom Wayland to arrange a site visit.

Organization:

Christine asked members to consider a committee chair and vice chair. Mr. Varraso **MOTION** to nominate Elizabeth Mees as Chair, seconded Ms. Herbst – unanimously voted. Next Mr. Varraso **MOTION** to nominate Ron Frazier as Vice-Chair, seconded by Ms. Herbst – unanimously voted.

Ron Frazier also suggested that the Braintree Historical Commission invite Chris Skelley from Mass Historic Commission to come down and make a presentation on the role and responsibility of the Commission. It was agreed to invite him to the October 7th meeting and Christine will contact and schedule it with Mr. Skelley.

Proposed Goals:

Christine asked the members to consider attainable goals for the next 12 months that can serve as a work plan for the Commission. Elizabeth Mees discussed past efforts to institute a demolition delay bylaw – she provided a history on these efforts and her desire to attempt this again with the new Town Council for passage. Kate Nedelman Herbst noted that the Commission should support and be involved with the use of the former

Thayer Library restoration efforts. Paul Carr would like to pursue affirmation that the Gallivan house is

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part of the historic district and if for some reason it is not – that this be a goal for the commission. Ron Frazier would like to see the Elm Street Cemetery project move forward – he provided some background on why it has not moved forward. Christine asked members to provide three potential professionals that may be able to do the work and her office could solicit quotes since the appropriation is less than \$25,000 procurement limit. Ron Frazier also asked that another goal be to reinstitute the Historical Inventory program. Kate Nedelman Herbst mentioned the Route 17 exit (Union Street) as discussed with the Mayor to be another goal. Discussion ensued as to what would be the objective of this goal and should certain areas around this intersection be looked at – it was agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting. Elizabeth Mees noted that at the next meeting (9/16) we will prioritize these goals but for the interim this was a good start with 5 or 6 attainable goals.

Due to the closure of the library, Ms. Nedelman Herbst **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Frazier – unanimously voted.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM

Respectfully submitted

Christine Stickney, Director
Planning & Community Development