

**Braintree Historical Commission**  
Minutes

September 16, 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 7:03 PM

Administrative Matters:

Members were provided with a list of contacts for each member. Ms. Nedelman Herbst **MOTION** to accept the minutes of 8/26/09, seconded by Mr. Varraso – unanimously voted. Chair Mees asked members what they would like to do relative to Mr. Skelley’s response to our request to meet. After a brief discussion it was agreed Ms. Mees would speak with Mr. Skelley about arranging a daytime meeting. Mr. Varraso announced that he has a conflict with the first Wednesday of the month for meetings – members rescheduled their future meeting dates to 10/14, 11/10(Tues) and 12/9 – staff will adjust posting and check on room availability.

Discussion Items:

*CPA Update:* Christine Stickney provided a brief update on the applications filed with the CPA committee for this coming round:

Historic Map Preservation Project	(Engineering)	\$5,000 (Historic)
Town Forest Trail Project	(Councillor Clifford)	\$3,400 (Open Space)
Original Thayer Library	(Mayor/ P& CD)	\$35,000 (Historic)
Taber Court land acquisition	(Conservation)	\$134,000 (Open Space)
Highlands School	(School dept)	\$398,800 (Historic)

Members expressed their concerns with the school proposal being more of a maintenance project than historic restoration. Christine noted that their application states that the former Historical Commission voted to find the school historically significant – members of the former commission questioned this and asked Christine to look into the matter and report back at the next meeting.

*Center Historic District – Gallivan house:* Ron Frazier noted he had spoken with Town Clerk to research the matter of the property being included into the district. Chair Mees noted her research through the Electra Tritsch 2002 historic resource study showed the property in the district. At question is to find the actual Town Meeting action that accomplished this and staff will continue to pursue as will members. Ms. Nedelman Herbst questioned why many of the buildings on the Thayer campus are not listed in the zoning code or shown on the map. Mr. Frazier noted the recent construction and that

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even though not listed the district encompasses the property of Thayer property. A discussion arose as to how the Dining Hall/Student Union was built in the 1990's with out Historic Commission review? Staff was requested to review the building files to see if a Certificate of Appropriateness had ever been issued. Ms. Nedelman Herbst suggested that the town code be amended to include the Gallivan House as well as the new construction on the campus. Christine suggested that with the Town's GIS system an updated map could easily be developed to match an amendment to the code. The process of amending the district was discussed and going before the Town Council. Mr. Varraso questioned if there could be more than one district in a town and members affirmed there could be but requires Town Council action to adopt. Mr. Frazier at this opportunity questioned the Elm Street cemetery and what is going on. Christine noted she was awaiting direction from the members on how to contact three historical surveyors to obtain quotes. After a brief discussion it was agreed to post the request for quotes on Mass. Historical list serve since the project would be below the \$25k threshold of procurement – only three quotes are necessary.

*Demolition Delay MHC workshop:* Chair Mees noted she will be attending the workshop 10/17 and asked if there were any questions. She stressed the need to re-institute the proposed bylaw but with a more public relation before approaching the Town Council to educate the public on the benefits of a bylaw. Chair Mees and Ms. Nedelman Herbst will work on this together to pull something together for the committee to review.

*Exit 17 proposed goal:* Members discussed the Mayor's comments relative to Exit 17. Christine provided a quick overview of the Town initiatives under way with the landfill, motel 6, Messina property and the MBTA rail bridge. The Mayor has expressed his vision of the area as a gateway to the community and the need to be inviting to the historical character as seen when reaching Washington Street from Union Street. Mr. Carr provide information on the Historical Society's goals with the Gallivan's house to make a portion of it a tourist center plus restoring the original doctor's office from the 1930's for visitation. Chair Mees provided her thoughts on the original Thayer library as the first focal point to the Town Center. She suggested that most downtowns/historical districts that are inviting have a public building available with restrooms and visitor's information and that perhaps a portion of the building should be utilized as such. Mr. Frazier noted that such a public building requires personnel oversight to prevent vandalism and questioned if there is a Town department that can do that given the fiscal situation. Mr. Carr expressed his opinion the building was too larger for that use and provided his vision of it being used as a "mini" Faneuil hall. Ms. Nedelman Herbst noted discussions around town for a Thanksgiving farmer's market. Mr. Frazier reminded members of the handicap accessibility issues with the building. Chair Mees noted that her experience with the issue offers different alternatives either through an addition that bridges the old and new architecture or the exterior reflecting the existing building with

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brick façade. Mr. Carr noted that the historical society has done a master plan for their properties and he believes a statute of Sylvanus Thayer should be placed on the grounds (mall) in front of Town hall and the original Thayer library. Members then discussed the former mall project and the different phases proposed and that this must be discussed when considering the use of the Old Thayer Library. Christine Stickney noted the Mass. Cultural Council's initiatives to promote cultural events with historical properties and downtown economic development – this area is ideal for such collaboration. Ms. Nedelman Herbst suggested inviting the public to provide input on the potential use of the building. Members discussed a possible public meeting and concurred to see if one could be scheduled for either 10/28/09 or 10/21/09 depending on availability of the auditorium. At the next meeting the committee will work on the development of the presentation and format for the public meeting to discuss use of the building. Staff will coordinate the auditorium and public media notice of the event. Members asked that the legislative team be invited to attend and if Mayor Sullivan could make the opening remarks. It was also discussed to have Braintree cable cover the meeting if possible.

The next meeting will be on 10/14/09 – members would like to meet at 6:30PM to take a walk through the Old Thayer library before their meeting – staff will post accordingly

Ms. Nedelman Herbst MOTION to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Varraso – unanimously voted. The meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Stickney, Director  
Planning and Community Development