

Braintree Historical Commission  
Minutes  
December 3, 2012  
Town Hall – Johnson Chambers

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

Absent: Christine Stickney

Meeting convened at 7:06 PM

Update on the RFQ/RFP – Old Thayer Library Project – Phase II (Doors and Windows)

Elizabeth and Kate will be reviewing the two proposals submitted from Bargmann Hendrie + Associates and CSS Architects – evaluating and providing a recommendation – they will share their findings for the next meeting.

Guidelines for Historical Significance

Elizabeth Mees suggested it should be handed out whenever someone comes in to get affidavit for historical significance. Discussion that guidelines should also be posted to our website; the Commission believes they do not need to be dispersed/posted at any other place, but guidelines need to be available to anyone wanting a copy of it with a CPA Application.

Old Business:

*Discussion on 216 Elm St Property*

Elizabeth Mees didn't see any historic restoration, just saw stabilization. She believes that people should make a home to feel comfortable but the house certainly wasn't made into a period piece or museum piece. In addition she noted that if we want to give credit for stabilization of a historic property, that would be okay, but we should then suggest national register or historic district status to the owners. Though the house looks great, a lot more that could have been done. Ron Frazier believes that the fact that they kept an old house in good condition is worthy of recognition, as the owners saved an important property. Paul Carr agrees but significant issue as to authenticity is that the stockade fence not properly there. Elizabeth Mees noted the restoration was not consistent in materials put forth; not preservationist in terms of historical preservation. Ron Frazier added that he was told that the homeowners had hired a historic preservationist. Elizabeth Mees commented that if anyone sets themselves up saying they historically preserved house, they should be held to a higher standard; she does not believe that the higher standard was met here, no matter how beautiful the home is. Further notes on house--mural not destroyed but needs to be preserved; only from the 1920s. Additional discussion on this issue will be tabled for discussion at future date.

*Discussion on Elm Street Cemetery:*

Ron Frazier was unable to convince CPA to vote at last meeting because they wanted more bids. He has looked into requesting more firms to answer bids. Mt Auburn does all their own work so did not get any names though he obtained some recommendations from them. Ron Frazier indicates it is impossible to get other quotes; only one response from one other company in Connecticut. Difficulty is that they need people to work on slate & marble, not granite, which is what people are used to working. Ron Frazier now has formal quote from Monument

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Conservation Collaborative & from Colonial Stone as well as the estimated in the official survey. Ron Frazier will now go back to CPC with additional quotes.

Elizabeth Mees said she will ask Christine if we should draft a letter requesting additional patrols near the Elm St Cemetery. Ron Frazier thinks motion detector lights should be installed at the cemetery to keep people/trash out. Paul Carr suggests we could approach BELD on this issue. Ron Frazier agrees and says we should ask Christine to ask BELD to do it.

*Online Historical Survey:*

Kate Nedelman Herbst noted that she will send draft out for review for next meeting.

*Discussion on CPA Request from Inspectional Services: Re: Digitizing Project*

Ron Frazier believes that the work Inspectional Services is doing is important work but does not seem that historically significant. Al Varraso supports that belief however he thinks there are more important things for money to be spent on. Kate Nedelman Herbst believes that the request seems more maintenance than historic significance; while it's important to keep records, the actual preserving of them electronically is not in itself historically significant. Elizabeth Mees asked if there should be further discussion or vote. Paul Carr is afraid other departments will also come in and ask for similar funding. Ron Frazier adds while all records are historically important, our primary concern is with preservation of endangered things; does not believe that this is that different from what Town Clerk is doing. Elizabeth Mees added that building plans seeking to be scanned are not that old, most of those buildings are still standing. Ron Frazier also state he is not in support because it is not like the documents will be lost forever if we don't do this. Kate Nedelman Herbst asks what percentages of records are really from pre 1950s? Are the vast majority new and just a few old ones? Al Varraso stated that he is not in support as he believes we could spend our money on more important things. Kate Nedelman Herbst suggests that the Commission write letter saying some of records are historically significant but records in their entirety are not. Ron Frazier **MOTION** to vote, Al Varraso —seconded finding the application to be NOT historically significant? Elizabeth Mees asked all in favor - Unanimous. Elizabeth Mees says she will ask Christine what decline process is; should we write letter explaining decision.

Administrative Matters:

Everyone signed their Mandatory Ethics Training information requested by the Town Solicitor. Elizabeth Mees will ask Christine to add discussion about 216 Elm St for next meeting. Ron Frazier asked if we are not meeting in December. Kate Nedelman Herbst noted it is December! Elizabeth Mees says next meeting January 7, 2013. Al Varraso makes a **MOTION** to adjourn, Kate Nedelman Herbst seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM

Respectfully submitted

Kate Nedelman Herbst