

Braintree Historical Commission
Minutes
June 3, 2013
Town Hall – Johnson Chambers

Present: Elizabeth Mees (Chair) Kate Nedelman-Herbst
Ron Frazier

Absent: Paul Carr & Al Varraso

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

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

New Business:

Old Thayer Library – Christine provided the members with architectural renderings from Jack Glassman at BH+A depicting the front doors proposed for their review. The Chair expressed her hesitation on any vote tonight with two members absent but said a discussion would be welcome. Christine noted that the other members had received the renderings as well via email and that we may need to set up another summer meeting date so that we can continue forward with putting the specifications and plans out for this construction season.

Elizabeth explained the renderings noting that although the doors are very large the top panel is stationary and only were the dotted diamond outlined on the doors is what opens outwards. Panels are commonly used for this time period to balance the height of the door. She noted in addition that Jack's email spoke to "stain grade" oak and "paint-grade" would be the finish. Christine raised a concern that the Town is not very good at maintenance as can be seen with the Town Hall front doors that are supposed to be oiled every year and the discoloration occurring with those doors and this should be kept in mind. Elizabeth noted that stain grade is much nicer however painted was common for this time period however it is susceptible to chipping – the federal government has begun to use a heavier dense paint that is also scuff proof on their historic doors.

Ron Frazier questioned what evidence do we have that this rendering is what was on the building originally? Elizabeth noted the historical pictures that BH+A had researched the doors were designed from but unfortunately they are black and white. Elizabeth suggested we ask Jack Glassman for his recommendation on the finish – noting how the door is to be used with public access.

Members agreed to set a tentative date of June 24th to meet again to discuss the doors when all members could be present.

Town Hall RFQ/RFP – Christine reported on a joint effort with the DPW to have a new assessment done on the Town Hall by a historic preservation architect. In the past other assessments have been done by others for various purposes. Responses are due in by June 27th and as with the other selection committees a member of the BHC will be asked to review and comment.

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Appointment (7:30PM) Laura Graziano – Charlotte Rose Kelly Play Area at French’s Commons

Christine noted that recently her department learned of the proposal for a play area in memory of Charlotte Rose Kelly proposed on French’s Common which is located in the Braintree Center Local Historic District (LHD). Under the Town’s ordinance, the BHC has jurisdiction of any structure proposed within the district and may require a Certificate of Appropriateness and a public hearing. Christine noted the question is “structure” and if this play area falls within that definition. Ms. Graziano was accompanied by Gerard Timmons working with her on the fundraising (6/7/13) and proposal and Joe Powers, Town Clerk was present as an interested resident. Mr. Timmons provided members with renderings of the proposed play structures and area and explained how the project came to be after meeting with Mayor Sullivan. Mr. Timmons described the existing equipment as being non-compliant for today’s standards and showed the commission the proposed swing set and play structure proposed to replace it. Christine asked if what is shown is the extent of the proposal because she was aware that the Committee on Disabilities had concerns with an access path and parking. Mr. Timmons responded that talked with them and they are all set and it is ADA compliant. Kate Herbst Nedelman asked if any benches are proposed near the area. Mr. Timmons they are not proposing any they are on a limited budget and Ms. Graziano felt there were some existing further down on French’s Common. Elizabeth Mees asked about the colors orange and purple and if they could be more toned down given the location in the LHD. Mr. Timmons noted those are the colors for neuroblastoma the disease Charlotte lost her life to. Ron Frazier asked if they have met with the neighbors as to the design. Members also questioned why this location in the LHD and Ms. Graziano explained it was recommended by the Mayor’s office. Members asked about the surface beneath the structure as to what material it will be and what is the actual size of the area – Mr. Timmons referred to the plans that the swing set is 765 SF in area and the structure is 847 SF of area – for a total of 1612 SF and the base will be fiber mulch – he was asked further if this was an equal replacement for what exists today? Mr. Timmons responded yes.

Ms. Mees asked if there was any possibility to accent the structure with the colors rather than make it all purple and orange – she noted that the plans show the swing set as black with seats and poles. Mr. Timmons explained the significance of the colors. Elizabeth understands the significance of the colors but the Local Historic District has historical structures that the BHC has been charged by the community to oversee in this district. Mr. Powers add his support for the proposal and recognized the difficult position the BHC is in but he had been working with these folks since January. Members were asked if they were ever directed to consult with the building or community development office – no was the response. Elizabeth noted that she has no opposition to the cause behind the playground but unfortunately everyone within the district is held a higher level of scrutiny and must be treated equally – if an exception is made then it sets a precedent for other future proposals. Christine asked what the time frame for the proposal is. – Mr. Timmons noted that they need to order the equipment within a week and the dedication is August 14, 2013 Charlotte’s birthday. Members felt they did not have enough information as to the following: 1) Does the play area require a building permit? 2) Are there alternative colors for the playground equipment that could be toned down/muted to meet the criteria of the LHD – members suggested looking at Hollis playground 3) what is the current measurements of the existing playground in comparison to the new area proposed of 1612 SF – is it an equal placement in kind? Ron Frazier added that something should be in writing from the owner the Town (Mayor) authorizing this development on Town Land. Elizabeth Mees in conclusion stated – how can we achieve what you want and also protect the Town’s interests within the Local Historic District. The next meeting is June 24th and they asked Ms. Graziano/Mr. Timmons to return with additional information about the proposal.

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Old Business:

Elm Street Cemetery – Christine reported that the request for funding was forwarded to the Mayor for Council Action. Elizabeth informed the members of the CPA meeting she attended and how additional funding was approved for the security system as well – totaling \$14,000.00. Christine said someone needs to attend the Ways and Means meeting with her to answer any questions and she will let members know of the date and time.

Update Historic Inventory – Christine reported the contracts were sent out to Ms. Broomer she is waiting for them back to circulate – she will ask her to come to a meeting before she starts.

Demolition Delay – nothing to report

Gallivan House status – Christine reported that the historic restriction was signed but the bank was not agreeable to subordinate their mortgage and the CPA released the funds for them to get started. She is waiting for it to be returned from Town Hall – it then goes next to the Mass Historical Commission.

Administrative Matters:

Ron Frazier requested an amendment to the minutes on page 2 – adding “after having met with them 2x’s and having them not request any additional information”.... Christine will revise the minutes and send them back out to members for approval at the next meeting.

Kate Nedelman Herbst **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Ron Frazier – unanimously voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40PM

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Stickney, Director
Planning and Community Development