

Approved 1/24/2022

Duxbury Local Historic District



Commission

TOWN CLERK

2022 JAN 31 PM 5:23

DUXBURY, MASS.

Local Historic District Commission Meeting May 11, 2021

Attendees: Renée Mierzejewski, chair, Evelyn Walker, John Bates, Phil Tuck, Bill McArdle, Janet Ritch, Georgia Taft Pye

Members of the Public: Kathy Cross, Open Space Committee, Tag Carpenter and Arthur Evans, Historical Commission

Renée Mierzejewski called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and went over the Order regarding Open Meetings in Massachusetts during the pandemic.

She then brought up the upcoming Town Meeting and the presentation for Article 21, the acceptance of five new Local Historic Districts. She said that there would be a joint presentation possibly with the Historical Commission and the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society to address the confusion as to the differences and distinctions among the three entities, stressing that the LHDC is tasked only with creating local historic districts, providing a means to preserve historically and architecturally significant buildings in town through a deed related legal process that provides for long term preservation. Tag Carpenter, chair of the Historical Commission, stressed that the Historical Commission is charged only with reviewing properties 75 years or older slated for complete or partial demolition, but they have no role or ultimate responsibility in building preservation.

In discussion the distinctions among these groups, Bill McArdle asked about the process for the 75 year or older demolition delay and how the Historical Commission is notified and who has the responsibility to send property owners to the Historical Commission. He suggested that the process could be advertised better in support of the cause of historical preservation as well as provide additional information that could be helpful to property owners. He also stated that a better definition of architectural significance and how to define preservation could be very helpful.

Renée stated that the idea of preservation is not consistent town-to-town in the Commonwealth. She said that in addition to architectural significance, community significance matters as well. Tag Carpenter agreed saying that buildings are not just important in an historical group but also are important features of the community.

Renée then brought up for discussion how the LHDC and the HC could work best together. She pointed out that the HC usually knows early on about proposed plans to alter or tear down a

property in town. She stressed that the LHDC primarily reviews proposed changes to properties that are already located in an LHD. She mentioned the difficulties of working with plans that are evolving and possibly changing significantly thus creating a need for the LHDC being involved earlier in the process and kept up to date on changes. Tag Carpenter stated that property owners applying for a building permit or demolition permit are sent on to the Historical Commission. Tag said that the Building Department has a check list for applicants and the need for HC review is at the bottom of that list. Georgia Taft Pye mentioned the public relations issues with town residents concerning HC and LHDC review of plans. Tag agreed and said that it was important for the public to have a positive perception of the process. Renée suggested that the LHDC and the HC meet once a quarter to share information. Tag said he will try to get more communication from the HC on upcoming issues to Renée. He observed that the LHDC had more dealing with historically significant and often date boarded structures whereas the HC often had the “ragged edge” of properties and had to determine if any historical significance existed.

Tag asked what properties were in process to be established in an LHD. Renée said she would send him a list of the properties the LHDC is considering to submit for approval at the 2022 Town Meeting and mentioned that Terry Vose is working on a grouping of properties for a possible new LHD on Powder Point. She also discussed the Certificate of Appropriateness that the LHDC can award to properties where renovations are proposed. She said that the LHDC had created a “Myth Busters” handout to help property owners understand what is allowable for properties in local historic districts and counteract the perception that nothing can change and the requirements are iron-clad. She also mentioned the brochure that has been created.

For future mutual activities, Renée mentioned LHDC plans for events and a speakers series could involve the HC as well. She stated that the Commission hopes to have David Andreozzi as a speaker for the second Local Historic District Day in September 2021,

Janet Ritch asked Tag what properties are currently being reviewed by the HC. He stated that there are three properties currently on one year delays. These are:

- 313 Washington Street
- 57 Shipyard Lane
- 260 Washington Street: barn

He also mentioned the 761 Temple Street property the Town has purchased which is still on delay. He hopes that property will become a LHD.

For another Town Committee with an emphasis on preservation, Kathy Cross said that open land was important for preservation as well. She mentioned that Valerie Massard has been coordinating with the Senior Center regularly on both Open Space issues and walkability potential.

Tag mentioned that the Planning Department put together this past summer a preservation plan for open space and that the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society has been in the lead on that issue. Renée mentioned that there is a need for more outreach with the Rural and Historical Society and that cross pollination for ideas and events would be helpful for all. Kathy Cross

mentioned that Envision Duxbury has stressed the need for historical and land preservation. She mentioned Valerie Massard's workshops at the Senior Center that have focused on Envision Duxbury. Renée mentioned the grant writing effort Valerie is taking on and that she is looking for volunteers.

Janet Ritch asked if there was any way of helping homeowners who own an historic property but do not have the funds to maintain it. Tag responded that for privately owned property there was no funding source. He said there are some funding sources for publicly owned or property owned by non-profit organizations or a private house museum. Evelyn Walker mentioned that there are a number of properties in town that are now missing their historic barns. Bill McArdle asked about how to work better with owners who want to tear down properties. Georgia mentioned the LHDC goal for more communication with local real estate offices that has been delayed by the pandemic situation. Tag said that for some properties that are beyond saving demolition is the only resolution.

Tag also mentioned the "double jeopardy" situation that could be possible for buildings covered by both the 75 years or older demolition review and the LHDC review. Phil Tuck asked if a Certificate of Compliance might possibly be issued to show a property owner has met all requirements of review. Phil also asked if the Building Inspector had a say in that. Bill McArdle mentioned the Occupancy Permit might be a means to show all points had been taken care of. Georgia said that both Certificates of Compliance and Occupancy Permits are defined by state law and regulations. Renée mentioned that the LHDC Certificate of Appropriateness is the legal document to cover the situation for renovation of a property in a LHD.

Renée then reviewed the timeline that needs to be followed to identify and present properties for inclusion in a local historic district. She said that the Town would like more groups of properties for local historic districts, not just singular properties. Phil Tuck stated that the way we have approached recruitment so far has been appropriate given that many people in Town still aren't familiar with the concept. He said that we should consider the American Legion Hall for this next group and said he would contact the Legion. Evelyn Walker mentioned 787 Keene Street for inclusion as it is a first period house and the establishment of a Keene's Brook Local Historic District. Janet Ritch brought up the Ford's Store property in Millbrook. Georgia mentioned Pam Campbell Smith's efforts for the Alden Historic District. Renée said that we could get some help to Valerie Massard with 761 Temple Street. Tag Carpenter said that the Temple Street property has not been subdivided yet and affordable housing is planned for part of the property. Kathy Cross discussed researching and reaching out to abutters of a new Temple Street LHD. She mentioned eleven historic homes that have been researched in that area and could be passed along. Evelyn Walker brought up Sarah Evans's book on Ashdod as a source for additional properties for an Ashdod LHD.

Renée said that perhaps a memorandum of understanding could be written for the Temple Street property in the same manner as was executed for the Island Creek property on Washington Street to serve as a commitment for historic preservation until other aspects of the property have been dealt with. Kathy Cross said she will be meeting with Joe Grady and will ask him about the timing for a survey of the Temple Street property. Tag said this is an important property as it

still has the original pasture land intact and LHD's can include land as well as buildings. He said that the 12 month delay of demolition is valid until October. If the Town were to sell the property, the new owner would have a demolition permit ready to go. Kathy Cross said she was in favor of a memorandum of understanding for the Temple Street property. She asked if 40B's were affected by LHD designation. Renée mentioned the requirement for public hearings for changes to LHD's.

Janet Ritch moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.