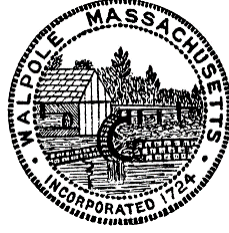


# APPROVED MINUTES

## Members

Samuel D. Obar, Chair  
Christine M. Cochrane, Vice Chair  
Mark G. Almeda  
George B. Ransom  
Roger F. Turner, Jr.  
Kathleen A. Birtwell, Associate  
Melissa Totten, Associate



**Walpole Historical Commission**  
Walpole Town Hall  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

A meeting of the Walpole Historical Commission was held on January 5, 2017 at the Walpole Town Hall, Room 116.

## **The following members were in attendance:**

Samuel D. Obar, Regular Member, Chair  
Christine M. Cochrane, Regular Member, Vice Chair  
Mark G. Almeda, Regular Member  
George B. Ransom, Regular Member  
Roger F. Turner, Jr., Regular Member  
Melissa Totten, Associate Member

## **The following members were not in attendance:**

Kathleen A Birtwell, Associate Member

## **The following guests were in attendance:**

Katrina Margolis, Reporter - Hometown Weekly  
Timothy Higgins, 1034 East Street  
Frederick Giandomenico, Attorney - 1034 East Street  
Michael Amaral

Chairman Sam Obar called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Obar begins with 1034 East Street. Mr. Obar presents the EDC letter (12/14/16) and the HC response (12/20/16), the letter submitted by Attorney Giandomenico(1/2/17) and the Structural Engineering Review of 1034 East Street(12/22/16) for the record.

Mr. Higgins goes over the Structural Engineering Review and says although the structure at 1034 East Street is not practical or reasonably feasible to preserve, the project would use parts of the structure as non-structural features in a new building and would work with the Walpole HC during this process.

Mr. Almeda states Mr. Giandomenico's letter reflects the leg work done to sell the property as is but no one over the past few years has shown interest in preserving the property in its poor repair. Mr. Almeda also states he accepts the Structural Engineering Review.

Mr. Ransom states he is also satisfied with the response to HC's request.

Ms. Totten states it is a good structural report and happy to have had the HC's questions answered.

Ms. Cochrane also states she is satisfied with the letter and report. Ms. Cochrane asks Mr. Higgins if the timbers are going to be used in the new development?

Mr. Higgins states yes, he has done a lot of this kind of work in the past and is thrilled to do that. Mr. Higgins intends to be back before the HC to give updates and get the HC's input.

Christine Cochrane makes a Motion that:

*Chapter 349-5 Exception A of the Town of Walpole's Demolition Delay Bylaw be applied to 1034 East Street, Walpole, MA*

*There is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such building/or structure.*

Mr. Ransom seconds the Motion. The Motion passes 5-0-0

Mr. Obar states he will send a letter to the Walpole Building Commissioner informing him of the Board's vote and under Chapter 349-5 the Building Commissioner may now issue a demolition permit for 1034 East Street, Walpole, MA

Before leaving, Mr. Higgins let the members of the HC know that members can go through the site again and he will work with the HC on ways of preserving and using elements in the new construction.

Mr. Higgins and Mr. Giandomenico leave at 7:24 pm.

7:25 pm Mr. Michael E. Amaral arrives.

Mr. Amaral reads a prepared statement and submits it for the record. See Attached

Mr. Amaral leaves at 7:40 pm.

Mr. Obar states there are many opinions/ideas out there for the reuse of the Old Town Hall. Mr. Obar feels the purpose of Mr. Amaral's visit was to get the HC thinking and agrees we need to make this a priority of the HC. Mr. Obar states that Christine Cochrane is going to be on the reuse committee appointed by the BOS. Mr. Obar also informs the HC that a letter has been sent to the MA Historical Commission and cc'd the BOS to put this on their radar.

Mr. Turner states that the plan which was included in Mr. Amaral's statement of the Fire Station being combined with the Old Town Hall is impossible today. The new fire station already has plans, has been approved by Town meeting and bids are out. He also states that public meetings have been held in the library regarding town plans.

Mr. Almeda states the drawing shown by Mr. Amaral was just an example to show how the Old Town Hall with additions can be reused to keep it part of the town and a public building. Mr. Almeda states a vacant building is not good and private may be the only pausable solution with deed restrictions.

Ms. Totten feels all the rumors of reuse plans are not helpful and if the HC is going to take a position she does not want to see an old design if it is not happening and wants to see what is being presented currently. Ms. Totten suggests the HC should come up with a position that the Old Town Hall never be demolished and should further be preserved with the integrity it has. She states find a use to keep it's integrity.

Mr. Almeda states the HC should support the adaptive reuse.

Mr. Turner states the Old Town Hall is an unique structure in town, indication of past history and has not been altered.

Ms. Katrina Margolis leaves at 8:00 pm.

Mr. Obar states the dredging at Memorial Pond is being done to preserve the pond. Mr. Turner states the bridge at Memorial Pond was built for the 200th and the pond was an afterthought.

### **Correspondence**

Mr. Obar would like input on how the board wants to respond to correspondence.

Mr. Almeda states if someone requests information on an item from a past meeting respond with: the minutes and if the minutes are in draft form provide them and inform the person/board that once the minutes are approved the HC will provide those approved minutes.

Mr. Obar requests if the HC members refer to any documents to provided them for the record with the source.

### **Old Business**

Mr Obar states the ipad will be stored at the Deacon Willard Lewis House.

Barn Survey - Mr. Almeda is developing an interactive PDF form to be used in the Barn Survey.

### **New Business**

Mr. Obar shares information on seminars offered by the MA HC.

Mr. Obar makes a Motion that:

*The Walpole HC sponsor the seminar Administering the Demolition Delay Bylaw.*

Mr. Ransom seconds the Motion. The Motion passes 5-0-0

Mr. Obar states he would like to establish a list of priorities/projects for 2017 for the HC. Mr. Obar goes around the table and the following list is created.

1. Registry of Deeds Profiles
2. Old Town Hall (Assembly of Documents)
3. National Register Nomination - Walpole Town Forest
4. Ceremony for Union Station - Spring 2017
5. Barn Survey
6. House sign Project - In conjunction with the Historical Society

### **Approval Of Minutes**

Mr. Obar makes a Motion that:

*The Minutes of 11/17/16 be approved as amended.*

*Ms. Cochrane seconds the Motion. The Motion passes 3-0-2*

Mr. Obar makes a Motion that:

*The Minutes of 12/1/16 be approved as amended.*

*Ms. Cochrane seconds the Motion. The Motion passes 5-0-0*

### **Update Regarding Barn at 1000 West Street, Walpole, MA**

Mr. Obar states the opinion of the Walpole Town Counsel states a 2 year moratorium is required by the bylaw and it can not be limited or changed. Mr. Obar states he has forwarded Town Counsel's opinion to the applicant, Mr. Carl Swanson.

Mr. Obar makes a Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Ransom seconds the Motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourns at 9:42 pm.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

December 14, 2016

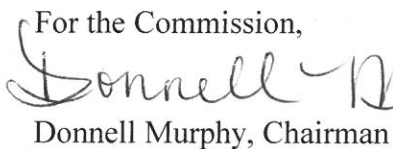
Walpole Historical Commission  
Chairman Samuel D. Obar  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

Dear Chairman Obar:

The Economic Development Commission is aware of a recent decision issued by the Historical Commission pertaining to the property located at 1034 East Street (at the intersection of East and Elm Streets) in which a six month demolition delay was imposed upon the Applicant.

We would like more information regarding this decision, specifically what criteria were examined in regards to the subject property that prompted the Historical Commission to vote in this manner and also which members of the Historical Commission voted in favor of or against the motion and whom abstained from the vote.

Additionally, the decision references a meeting to be held on January 5, 2017 regarding this matter. We are interested in possibly having a representative attend this meeting and would like to know if it is a public hearing or a public meeting and whether or not public input will be accepted.

For the Commission,  
  
Donnell Murphy, Chairman

## Members

Samuel D. Obar, Chair  
Christine M. Cochrane, Vice Chair  
Mark G. Almeda  
George B. Ransom  
Roger F. Turner, Jr.  
Kathleen A. Birtwell, Associate  
Melissa Totten, Associate



## Walpole Historical Commission

Walpole Town Hall  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

<http://www.walpole-ma.gov/walpole-historical-commission>

To: Donnell Murphy, Chairman, Economic Development Commission  
From: Samuel Obar, Chairman, Historical Commission  
Date: December 20, 2016

Dear Chairman Murphy,

Thank you for your letter requesting more information and an explanation of the reasoning for our vote to delay the demolition of the former Fales offices and machine shop at 1034 East Street for six months. Our Commission appreciates your interest in this issue.

The town of Walpole's Demolition Delay Bylaw (Chapter 349) governs the process through which the Commission reviews and votes on permits for demolition of structures that are more than 100 years old in the town. The Bylaw's stated purpose is for "protecting and preserving significant buildings and/or structures and aesthetic resources within the Town of Walpole."

In the case of Edgewood Development's application to demolish the structure at 1034 East Street (formerly known as the L.F. Fales Machine Company), the Commission first voted on November 5 that, based on our research of the history of this property, the structures under our jurisdiction (being more than 100 years old) were "historically and/or architecturally significant" under the definition outlined in Section 2 of the Demolition Delay Bylaw. It was the view of the Commission that the site, as home to the former L.F. Fales Machine Company, is importantly associated with Walpole's industrial history.

The Commission conducted a site visit of the property on November 19, and the Commissioners conducted extensive research on the history of this structure. On December 1, we had a spirited discussion about the preservation of this property during a public hearing that had been posted publicly and in The Walpole Times, and as you are aware we ultimately voted 3-1-1 that the former machine shop and offices should be "preferably preserved."

The specific motion that was approved is as follows:

The one-story building(s), historically known as the L. Fales Machine Shop, with the second story Fales offices at the corner of East and Elm Streets and defined as follows: approximately one hundred and sixty (160) feet along East Street and forty-eight (48) feet along Elm Street should be preferably preserved.

Mark Almeda, Christine Cochrane, and George Ransom voted in the affirmative; Sam Obar voted in the negative; and Roger Turner abstained.

It was the decision of the majority of the Commission that this is a rare and significant timber-framed industrial building. The former machine shop and offices contain original doors, floors and even hardware of the time. This structure is one of only two remaining wood-framed historic factories in Walpole. Once Walpole loses this important structure, there will be only one like it left in Walpole, on Diamond Street.

The Town of Walpole Community-wide Historic Properties Survey, conducted in 2008 by Kathleen Broomer, noted that the Fales Machine Company was a significant “stand-alone” historic resource that merits further documentation. Furthermore, Willard DeLue in his “Story of Walpole” stated that Fales’ success helped expand our ‘Sawmill Hamlet’ from an agriculture and lumber/mill town into a small industrial center, helping to tell the story of expanding ironworks markets in Southeastern Massachusetts.

The L.F. Fales Machine Company manufactured and repaired special machinery and a multiple needle sewing machine commonly used in heavy manufacturing. This type of machine was invented by Charles Fales. Based on information from a 1938 Walpole Times article, it is evident that the better-known companies of Kendall Mills and Bird & Son could not have fully functioned for so long without the machines and machine parts designed, produced, and sold to them by L.F. Fales.

Since the Commission is specifically tasked under the town Bylaws and under state law with protecting and preserving our town’s historical assets, we must balance what is in the public interest, with what is practical and feasible. The applicant’s plans for redevelopment are not under our jurisdiction and thus can not affect our decisions. As discussed during the meeting, the majority of the Commission believes that it is possible for the structure described in the motion to be preserved, even if the remainder of the complex is demolished and redeveloped.

During the six month delay, the Bylaw advises the applicant to make “continuing, bona fide, and reasonable efforts to locate a purchaser to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such building and/or structure.” The Commission recommended that a structural evaluation be made and signed letter be submitted by a licensed structural engineer giving an opinion as to whether the restoration and/or renovation of the structure defined in the vote was impractical and/or infeasible.

The Commission will meet January 5, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at Walpole Town Hall Room 116 to give the applicant an opportunity to show that these efforts have been made, and may lead to consideration by the Commission to modify the six-month ban on demolition per Section 5 of the Bylaw, “Exceptions.”

Members of your committee are welcome to attend this meeting, and the Commission’s practice in the past has been to allow public input at our meetings even if it is not a public hearing, as long as they are recognized by the chairman prior to speaking.

If you have any further questions, please contact me.

On Behalf of the Commission,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Saul Obar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Saul" and the last name "Obar" clearly distinguishable.

Samuel Obar  
Chairman

CC: Liz Dennehy, Community Development Director





**One Autumn Street  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
(603)433-8639  
Fax (603)431-2811  
WWW.JSNENG.COM**

December 22, 2016

Joe Bartucca  
Edgewood Development Company  
3 Belcher Street  
Plainville, MA

**Re: *Structural Engineering Review  
1034 East Street, Walpole, MA***

Dear Joe,

At your request, I visited the building at 1034 East Street in Walpole on Thursday December 15. The purpose of this visit was to review the existing building along East Street to assess structural condition and ability for re-use moving forward within the proposed project and also to give an opinion whether a restoration and/or renovation is practical or feasible. This was in response to the Walpole Historical Commission's determination that this portion of the structure "should be preferably preserved" (in letter dated 12/05/16). This section of the existing building is approximately 48' x 160' in dimension and was originally the L. Fales Machine Shop. The center portion of the building has a second floor that was used for office. A photo of the exterior is shown below.



*Consulting Structural Engineers*

The foundation of the building was constructed with cast concrete in some areas and stone rubble in others. The stone can be seen on the front elevation in the photo below and the interior is seen in the next photo.





The first floor consists of timber posts and beams supporting timber decking. The basement is damp and it is clear that it has been subject to flooding from the adjacent river and there is only about 6 feet of headroom under the beams. A sump hole in the floor shows the water level below is very close to floor level even in these dry periods.

The second floor is supported by very peculiar trusses that don't make sense structurally. They basically consist of a horizontal top member that supports the floor decking and is posted down to a triangular configuration of two other chords. The bottom chord, however, does not make any sensible connection to the sloping top chord. This is typically the main connection where tension in the bottom chord is resisted. This connection has vertical blocking between the members and a vertical rod. Its orientation is not sensible to resist tension forces in the chord. There is also blocking at the center of the truss as well as a hanger rod. This rod essentially supports the bottom chord. In many of the trusses, this blocking and rod have been completely removed to allow ductwork to pass through. I would not consider these trusses to be safe in their current condition. A photo showing one half of a truss is seen below.



Part of this truss has since been built into a wall. The distance from the brick pier to the center is approximately 25 feet, so the total truss span was about 50 feet.

The following photo shows where the vertical web and rod were removed for ductwork. Another timber runs perpendicular to these trusses and feeds thru between the bottom chord and sloped chord. It also provides solid blocking and another hanger rod extends thru this location. This timber has been cut off at the face of a truss in the second photo below.





As noted before, this was a very peculiar attempt at a truss type to span the intended 50 feet. Currently, other walls have been built that provide support for most of these members. The second floor has very noticeable slopes and sags that indicate there has been significant movement within these truss members. These trusses would not come close to passing any current building code design criteria.

There is also an area where severe water damage has occurred within and over the restaurant and bar area. The amount of wood rot indicates this problem has gone on for a long time. The following photo shows the timber decking above the edge of the bar. It is completely decayed. The floor decking along the side of the bar is so severely decayed that walking in that area is not safe.



The roof over the second-floor area can be seen in the shallow cavity between ceiling and roof structure. The roof is also framed with timbers and decking. The timbers are supported somewhat randomly by wood posts and studs. A photo taken within this cavity is shown on the following page.



JSN has worked on countless historic properties over the last three decades. We have worked diligently to renovate and rehabilitate old structures when it is both practical and feasible; or otherwise when they have significant historic value such as being on the National Historic Register. It is my opinion that in the case of the building identified for preservation that it is not practical or reasonably feasible to rehabilitate this building within the proposed project.

My opinion is based on the following:

- There are significant ground water issues on this property and water infiltration systems are required to capture and reclaim the water before going back into the soil or into the river. These systems are proposed beneath the footprint of this building.
- The basement of this building is non-functional due to moisture, flooding, and low clearance that does not meet code. The foundation certainly would not meet any new code criteria for design with respect to seismic issues.
- The first-floor structure, including posts and beams in basement, is generally sound. However, in my opinion it shows no unique structural characteristics that would qualify it as having such historic value that it should be maintained.
- The second floor “trusses” are somewhat unique, however they lack any sensibility, structurally speaking. They have also been hacked and modified. Notches have been made

and members have been completely removed for modern ductwork.

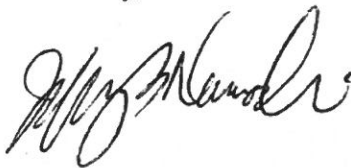
- The brick piers supporting the second floor, as well as the entire building, were also not designed for any seismic activity.

Moving forward, new or renovated projects should be designed for a life-span of 100 years or more. To achieve this would require lifting the building and replacing the foundation, as well as modifying the support of the trusses using interior bearing locations, or structurally modifying the trusses to clear span. These approaches would significantly change the original character of the trusses.

My recommendation is to preserve history through proper documentation of this building and possibly to use parts of the structure as non-structural features in a new building. Although the existing trusses are not valuable structurally, they do have a unique character and could be reconstructed as historic features, possibly in a lobby or entry.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Nawrocki, P.E.  
President





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FREDERICK C. GIANDOMENICO  
EDWARD J. GIANDOMENICO

fcg@giandolaw.com  
ejg@giandolaw.com

January 2, 2017

Walpole Historical Commission  
Walpole Town Hall  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

Re: 1034 East Street

Dear Chairman Obar and all other Commission Members:

Please be advised that I represent Liberty Village Condominium Association and various Unit owners thereof in relation to the proposed sale of the property and buildings located at 1034 East Street. While I fully understand the rationale for the Commission's decision to delay the issuance of a building permit for period of six months, I am writing this letter in an attempt to persuade the Walpole Historical Commission to alter its recent decision. I would like to emphasize to the Commission that its action not only may put the sale of the property on hold, but also could possibly jeopardize the entire project.

By way of background, I should point out that my brother Albert and I purchased the 1034 East Street property in 1984. We spent over a million dollars in renovating the premises, maintaining wherever possible not only the structural outline of the buildings but highlighting interior design as well. While my family still owns the majority of units and beneficial interest at the complex, there are now various other condominium owners as well.

For numerous and varied reasons it became apparent over the past few years for all parties that it was time to improve and develop the property. It also was in everybody's best interest to sell the property as a single entity. For the past two years my task was to come to agreement with all unit owners as to purchase price and terms, and then find an appropriate buyer.

Lining up all the unit owners was no easy task. Some people lived in their units; some have their life savings, or a portion thereof, invested in business located at the complex; some are nearing retirement, looking to "cash in"; others are looking to relocate (or possibly move back into a new complex at the same site); and others are looking to reside elsewhere. However, after extended negotiations, in the end, we all came to mutually agreeable terms and we all look forward to the sale of the property.

Marketing the property was relatively simple. The process began when an out of state nationally known entity approached us, without solicitation, just over three years ago with an interest in buying the entire complex. We thus began to think about a sale of the property. We have been working diligently since then to achieve our goal.



Before deciding upon selling to Edgewood Development, we did a nationwide search for buyers. We received offers from large national firms, well known regional developers, and a few local entities. Please be advised that every entity interested in purchasing the property envisaged and required the complete demolition of all buildings. No one expressed any interest in preserving any portion of the site. It simply was not feasible from an economic, engineering nor architectural stand point to preserve any portion of the existing building complex. All interested parties planned a complex basically similar in size and scope (but not necessarily quality) to that presented by Edgewood Development.

Our choice of Edgewood was based on many factors and did include a "hometown discount" on our part (other developers wanted to squeeze as many units as possible-up to 200 in total-in an effort to maximize profit with an inferior product). Gerry Lorusso, the head of Edgewood, was born and raised in Walpole. A well-known established and reputable developer, more than any other potential purchaser Gerry was in sync with my family's desire to preserve and improve Walpole and its center as much as possible. We all envision a high end, first class complex.

In summary, given that we consulted and negotiated with many developers regarding the 1034 East Street project, and that all of them required the complete demolition of the existing buildings; we believe the Historical Commission should reconsider its vote and allow this project to go forward immediately.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frederick C. Gandomenico

**Walpole Historical Commission**  
**Walpole, Mass.**  
**7 January 2017**

I'd like to make a few comments to the Historical Commission membership about several historical properties belonging to the citizens of Walpole: The Old Town Hall and Memorial Pond, located on School Street.

The Old Town Hall, now over 125 years old, was built after a rather drawn out discussion about what type of hall should be built.

Francis W. Bird, the industrialist, abolitionist and former state Senator from East Walpole, strongly proposed a wooden structure of much simpler design and intent. He was opposed by a group of citizens advocating a brick structure, made with modern materials that would house a large hall within for local meetings, events, concerts, etc.



At the time, town meetings were being held in a local church building that was far too small to comfortably allow for citizens to bear such close quarters with one another.

In the end, a vote was taken, the brick building design was chosen (at greater cost), and the building standing on the corner of Stone Street and Main Street was built.

Historical records do show on a map, however, that within 40 years or so, the town was thinking of replacing the structure and locating a new town hall at the site of the current post office. I know this as I've seen this map proposing such a location, with a re-designed downtown as well. ( don't have a copy of the map).

Obviously, the choice was to stay with the old building. That is what I'd like to reinforce: That the will of the people has always gravitated towards the preservation of this unique Norfolk county asset.

Architecturally, the design of the building was meant to convey a religious building. If you notice other towns, their Town Halls don't have this type of influence, even if of the same era. Note the East/West orientation of the building...very typical of many churches. Another advantage of its orientation: The North/South sides of the structure allowed for more even lighting via the large side windows that lined the walls of the large upper level hall.

Some of us in this room have memories of conducting town business within that structure, but at least for me, there is no memory of this large hall. The reason: sometime in the mid-1900s it was divided vertically in half...basically an upper level of office space was created with normal height ceilings. Ceiling joists divided that space turning the upper half of that once beautiful large hall into a nearly useless volume...mostly used for stringing various wire antennas from its rafters for police communications.

What I'm getting at here is that the old Town Hall was once the soul of the community: its large meeting hall truly was the first large open spaced non-religious building in the Town of Walpole, to be used by all of the community. Movies, Basketball games, town meetings....who knows what else! All these things took place in that upper hall.

Some of you may recall that during my tenure as the Chairman of the Walpole Historical Commission I attempted to connect the local history of the town to that building, especially during the Sesquicentennial of the War of the Rebellion which took place between 2011-2015.

I held several limited access open-house events where I displayed the Memorial Tablets honoring our Civil War Veterans. I led several small groups up into the upper divided area of the old meeting hall. I photographed the old mechanical clock in its tower and had those photos published in the Walpole Times. My intent was to publicize the potential of that former open space, in the hopes of interesting others in becoming advocates for the building.

I have here with me an architectural rendering which was done in 2012, and was given to me by former Town Administrator Michael Boynton. An architectural firm (CDR/Maguire) created this rendering in the hopes of providing insight into how the old town hall could be integrated into a new fire station design.

Though I don't really know where the town stands in regard to the architectural plans for a new fire station, I'd like to leave this rendering with the Commission. I'd like the Commission to use it as an example of what could be done with the building. I'm hoping that this rendering will inspire members to realize the power of such a rendering when visualizing the potential uses of the building. And I'm also suggesting that Walpole's new fire station design could still be incorporated with this historical asset, especially with Historical Commission members urging it to be so.

My greatest fear? That the old Town Hall ends up being private property....and in the wrong hands..hands that may be eager to destroy the building and use its central location and prime real estate for other purposes, erasing the historical significance of the site.

I urge you all to consider this: Once public property becomes private property, then that central location because subject to the whims of the owner. Yes, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, but that listing truly does not prevent its potential for demolition.

I'm strongly suggesting that the Commission continue to weave together the history of the building and the history of the generation that built it...the generation that won the War of the Rebellion, and I also strongly suggest that the Town of Walpole should not sell off the building but re-use it for Town purposes. If towns like Medfield, Canton, even Quincy can re-use or repurpose an old Town or City Hall, then why can't Walpole?

When I was first appointed to the Historical Commission, the chairman of the Board of Selectmen asked me to look into removing those memorial tablets and to possibly relocate them in the new public library that was being considered. On that very occasion of my appointment, I responded that I felt that the tablets are an integral part of the building, representing the generation that both won the War of The Rebellion and built that building, and that they should remain. I am hoping that the current Commission membership feels the same way.

Regarding Memorial Pond:

I've learned that the town of Walpole is considering dredging the pond to remove accumulated mud & silt to enhance its usability as a recreation area. I want to remind the Commission that Memorial Park (That is really what that area is...a park) is another historic property in the town, one dedicated to all of its veterans of all wars. The Historic Commission should be involved with any potential modifications or upgrades to the whole park, which includes the dam, the bridge, the landscape and how the water is controlled.

In the 1960's I was a young boy that once walked through Memorial Park on my way to the Stone School (now the Town Hall), and I still have a very good mental picture of those days. I can see its future potential: One that revisits its once glorious past.

I urge the Commission membership to take a pro-active interest in Memorial Pond. I feel that if the Commission does not, architectural structures not in keeping with the central location of the Park could be raised on the property and detract from its potential beauty.

I have a few suggestions:

To organize a site visit by the entire Commission membership at the Old Town Hall (I will volunteer to give a Saturday tour). Other visits promoted by the Commission, open to interested citizens could be arranged as well.

Use your imagination, and work to keep this asset of the people in the hands of the people. The easy way out is to just sell it for a song. Once it's out of Town ownership, it's gone forever. Instead of enriching the future residents of the Town of Walpole, it could possibly only enrich a family (as is what has happened with the Old Library).

I also suggest that the Commission visit the Memorial Park site, walk its grounds, and to arrange for representatives of the Commission to be involved with any upgrades or modifications related to that historic asset.

In closing:

I do note that recently a monument was erected at the Walpole High School to honor soldiers from Walpole who had died during wars since the 1890's, and who had attended Walpole Public Schools. I was stunned to learn that the Alumni Association members chose not to include any men who attended Walpole Public Schools before that era. Why? Their claim: The Walpole Public Schools were not formally organized until that period. But we all know the real reason: People in Walpole have an immature obsession with "Rebel Football" and any reference to our Civil War soldiers, including Walpole's only POW to die in enemy Rebel captivity, Pvt. Lowell E. Hartshorn, is considered off-limits.

So here we are: Our own local history is being "scrubbed" in the name of a childish game. And it affects your Commissions ability to tell a story about one of Walpole's greatest historic assets to its young people. Please tell me: *Is that a good thing?*

What concerns me most is that the current President elect also mocked a POW: One who was part of a group of POWs held for the longest period in American history. He trivialized Sen. John McCain. And his trivialization aids and abets the actions of our own Alumni Association in attempting to rewrite the History of the Town of Walpole.

If you are serious about American History, of which Walpole's own history is an integral part of, I hope you reflect on this in your deliberations about our Old Town Hall and all of your deliberations about Walpole's historical assets. As the former chairman of the Historical Commission, I always considered that Walpole's most important asset is the history of the Town Itself. To not preserve it in memory would be a disgrace. Don't let it happen!

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