

APPROVED MINUTES

Members

Mark Almeda, Chair
Christine Cochrane
Samuel Obar
Roger F. Turner, Jr., Vice – Chair
Kathleen Birtwell, Associate
George Ransom, Associate



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

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

A meeting of the Walpole Historical Commission was held on October 27, 2016 in the Walpole Room of the Walpole Public Library.

The following members were in attendance:

Mark Almeda, Regular Member, Chair
Christine Cochrane, Regular Member
Samuel Obar, Regular Member
Roger Turner, Regular Member
Katie Birtwell, Associate Member
George Ransom, Associate Member

The following guests were in attendance:

Jim Brady, Attorney representing Eamonn Lynch (1641 Washington Street)
John O'Leary

Chairman Mark Almeda called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Chairman Almeda read aloud Mass. General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, Subsection G, pertaining to Open Meeting Law procedure.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Almeda made a motion to approve the minutes of July 21, 2016.

Christine Cochrane seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Mr. Almeda made a motion to approve the minutes of September 29, 2016.

Christine Cochrane seconded the motion.

Mr. Turner said he would like meeting minutes going forward to include the names of all those members who are not in attendance.

The motion passed 3-0-1 (Roger Turner abstained.)

Correspondence:

Mr. Almeda sent an email to the Board of Selectmen regarding Jackie Huckle having resigned; the Old Town Hall re-use committee; and his decision to step down as Chairman. A copy of the email was forwarded to the Commission.

Building Commissioner David Norton:

Mr. Almeda said he would like to make some changes to the Demolition Delay Bylaw. These changes would clarify some definitions, among other changes.

Commissioner Norton said he was unaware that the Commission's demolition form had to be filed as a supplement to the initial Demolition Permit form; he thought it had to be filled out only if the Commission determines a building is historically significant. He will make sure this form is always filled out going forward.

Commissioner Norton can email all Commission members as soon as he receives a demolition permit to ensure the Commission doesn't lose any time, as it is required to take a vote on historical significance within 15 days of receiving the application.

1000 West Street - Barn:

Commissioner Norton said he has issued a Notice of Violation to the owner of the barn listed at 1000 West Street. The owner, Carl Swanson, did not obtain the necessary permits, including a demolition permit, to demolish the barn. The barn appears to be more than 100 years old based on Assessor records, meaning the Commission had jurisdiction over the demolition. The Commissioner had warned the owner not to remove the demolished pieces until he had conducted an investigation. The owner removed the pieces from the site anyway. The owner told the Building Commissioner that a neighbor called him to say the barn was falling down and there was a safety hazard. However the Building Commissioner says there are some inconsistencies in what he has been told by the owner versus what the neighbor has told him.

The Commission does not know what their enforcement powers are in this case. Mr. Almeda will send a list of questions to the Building Commissioner for him to ask Town Counsel.

1641 Washington Street

Attorney Jim Brady is here representing Eamonn Lynch who now owns 1641 Washington Street. They intend to file a demolition application soon. Mr. Lynch intends to demolish it and construct a new two-family house. The structure is currently a two-family house and was last occupied within a year. Rather than repair the current structure, he wants to demolish it and build new. The house is in disrepair.

They appeared before the ZBA last night to obtain a special permit for a determination that demolishing the house does not constitute an abandonment of the property. It is a pre-existing non-conforming use.

1034 East Street Demolition Application:

Christine Cochrane said the application is not yet complete since the applicant did not fill out the Commission's official demolition form.

However, the Commission still has to meet to determine whether it is historically significant. The Commission will meet Saturday, November 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Deacon Willard Lewis House to make a determination.

Reorganization:

Roger Turner asked if Mr. Almeda wanted to remain as an officer of the Commission. He said he did not have an interest.

Mr. Turner made a motion for a slate of officers: Samuel Obar as Chairman, Christine Cochrane as Clerk, and Vice Chair position to remain open for the time being.

Mr. Almeda seconded the motion.

The motion failed in a tie, 2-2 (Almeda, Turner in favor; Obar, Cochrane opposed).

Mr. Almeda made a motion that Mr. Obar serve as Chairman. Mr. Turner seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0-1 (Obar abstained.)

Mr. Obar made a motion to make Ms. Cochrane the Vice Chair. Mr. Turner seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0-1 (Cochrane abstained.)

There was discussion as to who should serve as Clerk. No one has an interest at this time. Ms. Cochrane can do meeting minutes for a short time until a permanent solution is found.

Union Station

Mr. Turner said May is a better month than April to host a ceremony for the Union Station National Register achievement. Mr. Obar asked if there were any changes to the letters to send to the state Transportation Secretary and Secretary of the Commonwealth. There were no significant changes.

Adjournment

Mr. Turner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Almeda seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4-0-0.