

**Westwood Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 10, 2012
Municipal Complex
101 Washington Avenue**

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 P.M.

2. Roll Call (present)

David Hohmann
George Mulhauser
Otokar von Bradsky
Linda Salib
Donald Rubin
Robert Miller, Councilmember Liaison
Gregory Dietrich, Preservation Consultant

Also present were:

William Martin, Chairman Westwood Zoning Board
Jaime Hodges, Chairman, Westwood Planning Board
Kimberly Redmond, Managing Editor, Community Life

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Proceedings

The Discussion continued from the previous meetings about how to implement the recommendations of the Westwood Ave Historic District Designation Report and to get a better understanding of the authority of the Historic Commission. We also discussed whether to consider and recommend changes to the Ordinance (which established the WHC), if warranted. William Martin, the Chairman of the Zoning Board and Jaime Hodges, the Chairman of the Planning Board were invited to participate at this meeting to share their insights and advise on these issues.

Mr. von Bradsky stated that the Ordinance requires that an applicant for a Building Permit in a designated historic district must appear before the Historic Commission as well as the Zoning or Planning Board, for their approval (Paragraph F 1.c.5). Mr. Martin added that once a historic district is established, project review by the WHC becomes mandatory. The Zoning and Planning Boards may also request that an applicant get an opinion by the WHC. The Zoning and Planning Boards can enforce decisions based on the advice of the WHC. The public's concern in the establishment of a historic district is that it imposes conditions on the applicant. Before the establishment of the WHC, most applicants were eager to improve their property and didn't need a town Board to do so.

Mr. Dietrich asked whether an applicant with a historic building in the currently designated commercial district could demolish and replace their building.

Mr. Martin said that under the current regulations they could. However, it would be unlikely because replacement with a new building would require difficult zoning conformity. Mr. Martin asked, "What can be done to make a historic district more palatable to the public?"

Mr. Hohmann stated that he prefers not to add any time or expense to the review process and does not feel that our work would be burdensome to the property owners. He is in favor of designating the Westwood Ave Historic District without any changes in the ordinance or the designation report. However, if we cannot get full support for the designation as per the ordinance and report, he would recommend two minor changes: 1) that representation before us, though it might be in the owner's interest, would not be mandatory, and 2) small scale changes, maintenance, or emergency repairs could be approved by the HPC chairman or by the Building Official, rather than by a majority of the WHC.

Mr. Martin suggested that the Westwood Ave Historic District Report should be made available to all the property owners to use as a resource for guidance in restoring or improving their properties.

The members of the WHC asked that Russell Huntington be invited to the next meeting in order to help clarify the WHC's authority.

The Ordinance requires that "Each year, all members of the Commission shall attend a conference or training workshop on historic preservation issues or a related field." (Paragraph C.4). Mr. Dietrich said that he would send the WHC information about available training.

Mr. Miller advised that funding for WHC training will have to be requested in the budget.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012 at 7:30 PM at the Westwood Borough Hall if the Meeting Room is available. An e-mail will be sent out to confirm the meeting.