

Westwood Historic Commission
Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 14, 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
Otokar von Bradsky
Linda Salib
Donald Rubin
Robert Miller, Councilmember Liaison
Gregory Dietrich, Preservation Consultant

Also present were:

Russell Huntington, Westwood Legal Counsel

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 10th meeting were approved unanimously.

5. Proceedings

The meeting began with an overview and discussion of issues brought up by the community at the August 8, 2012 public hearing. Some of the issues raised at the August meeting were the training of the commission members and their role relative to the Zoning and Planning Boards. There followed an open discussion between the commission members and Russell Huntington about the legal standing of the commission and its purpose. It was decided that further discussion of the commission's status would continue at the next meeting.

All of the members present expressed the desire that whatever role the commission would take that the process instituted should not become a financial burden on the community, that actions taken maintain the economic viability of the downtown district and that the eclectic historic character of Westwood is preserved.

Members present stressed the importance of not adding time to the lengthy building approval process wanting to make clear that the commission's review should take place at the same time as either the Zoning or Planning Boards are reviewing the applications and receiving input from other agencies such as the fire department, DPW, etc.

Many of the members expressed their opinion that the commission had been intended to be an advisory committee to the Planning Board. Potential changes to the ordinance enacted establishing the HPC were discussed. The topic will be further discussed at the next meeting. Some of the early options openly discussed ranged from leaving the HPC as a mandatory commission to changing the ordinance to an advisory committee offering advice to the Planning Board. Other options included; not designating any further districts, refining the proposed downtown district boundaries to focus on the key-contributing and contributing resources or designate individual key contributing building within Westwood. It is also a concern of the

members that historic buildings could be demolished without an option of preserving them without some form of designation.

The final topic for the meeting was the lack of a Certificate of Appropriateness created for use by the HPC. The certificate itself could be designed in such a way as to minimize the impact of HPC on the building process. A further discussion of the form the certificate should take will depend on the direction the HPC heads. It was recognized that further discussion would take place.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 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.