



TOWN OF WARE

Historical Commission
126 Main Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082

Minutes from Public Hearing held
October 27, 2014
6:30 p.m.

The Historical Commission's meeting took place as part of the public hearing on the proposed Demolition Delay Bylaw.

Present: Cindi LaBombard, Kathy Galford, Lynn Caulfield Lak, Judi Mosso, Wanda Mysona, Tracy Opalinski

Interested residents: Stuart Beckley, John Carroll, Art Lawler, Paul Opalinski, Betsy Calvert

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:31 p.m.

1. Public Hearing on Demolition Delay Bylaw – L. Lak gave a brief introduction about the bylaw and opened up the meeting for discussion, questions and general dialog.

Building Commissioner Art Lawler stated that he generally supports the bylaw and applauded the efforts of the Commission. He suggested ways to streamline the process and incorporate it with procedure already in place in the Building department. His suggestions included adding the HC to the permit sign off sheet; issuing a Certificate of Historic Review with the Commission's official response regarding historical significance. If a structure is significant, the HC will hold the demo application until the delay time has passed.

The Historical Commission feels confident that it can meet in a timely fashion to address demo requests.

C. LaBombard reiterated that the Commission receive information about buildings demolished due to fire.

P. Opalinski inquired about selling a historic building. A Realtor's best practices require full disclosure.

The Commission stated that the law is not cumbersome but valuable as it assists to guide owners to other resources in hopes of preserving Ware's historic structures which contribute to its unique character.

We see no need for a better notification.

A public hearing will be needed in order to set the fee schedule.

T. Opalinski stated that property owners can still exercise their constitutional right to demolish their building. She stated that historic buildings are enjoyed together by the community and changes to buildings changes our identity and make up of our town. We have town departments to protect our water, our safety and our health so this is not unlike the others – our bylaw is to protect the building and the character of Ware.

J. Carroll inquired about provisions to alter a building. (That is under the purview of the Building Commissioner).

J. Mosso will send final revision to Stuart for inclusion in Town Meeting packet.

T. Opalinski gave an example of a building in Carver, MA that was ultimately demolished because saving it was not cost-effective.

Art Lawler stated that Weston, MA has a delay bylaw already and after it was in place, much of their downtown was eventually demolished. So, it is truly a *delay bylaw; people still have a right to do what they want with their building.

If the building is sold in the middle of an active delay process, the new owner must apply for a new permit and the delay process and timeline starts all over again. The demo permit is attached to the applicant, NOT the building.

The MHC urged us to pursue the bylaw. Many towns have a paid Historical Commission in place but Ware's is all volunteer.

There will be a joint Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee meeting November 5 to review warrant articles. C. LaBombard, T. Opalinski and W. Mysona plan to attend.

Other topics brought up during public hearing:

2. New Business

K. Galford suggested amending Article 19 to return the care and custody of Nenameseck Square to the Parks Commission. Commission decided to leave the article for now and continue to work with the Parks Commission. Nenameseck Square is on the National Register therefore it will always be part of our collective interests.

T. Opalinski thought a Mr. Lemaitre in Hardwick might be interested in purchasing the old Fire Station. She will call him

Everyone agreed that our list of demolished properties was complete and ready to send to Tim Kane at Turley.

T. Opalinski learned that there is an offer on South Street School and another walk through.

T. Opalinski has been working with the Town Manager on sign and roof issues. Stuart may hire a new roofer as the current one does not respond in a timely fashion.

A meeting about the mural will take place mid-November

3. Adjourn - The public hearing closed at 7:15.

Respectfully submitted by Judith P. B. Mosso