

Saturday, December 13, 2014

1:00 PM Town Hall

Members in attendance: Mark Cullinan
Calantha Sears
Lynne Spencer
Mary Kay Taylor

Public attendance: Bonnie D'Orlando

AGENDA

1. Nahant Public Library:

The Library has received a planning grant (approximately \$45,000) from the Board of Library Commissioners which is being matched by a planning grant (approximately \$40,000) from Community Preservation awarded several years ago. The Library trustees have established a Building Committee to serve in an advisory capacity. Lynne Spencer has been asked to serve on that committee along with a number of people (approximately 12) representing various organizations and interests. Wendy Payne is the chairperson.

Lynne lead a discussion which explored how the Historical Commission could reasonably assist in this process, making it clear that the Historical Commission's purview should be focused on preservation of the architectural fabric, not on programming as it relates to operations or functions of the library or on historic furnishings, paintings, etc..

Mark offered that there could be a need to explain and clarify the roles of the various groups involved: the library trustees, Building Committee, Historical Commission and Historical Society. (A note: the Historical Society recently received several boxes of documents and artifacts that the Library has decided is not appropriate for it to retain. The Historical Society is seeking clarification on whether these items are gifts or loans. The Historical Society has also expressed concern about the status of paintings, furnishings and other materials that are being relocated, some to storage in the basement of the library; some to Town Hall where chairs have been stored in one of the ground floor meeting rooms.)

Lynne distributed copies of National Park Service Preservation Brief # 17, Identifying Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving g Their Character. This was used to guide a discussion about the character defining features of the Library building, both exterior and interior. The starting comment from the group was that it was easier to talk about what was not character defining. But everyone gamely pressed on developing the following list:

Exterior:

Shape and massing, roof slate and skylights, stone walls and trim, carved stone elements,

leaded glass windows, loggia with tile covering, front steps, metal work, sidewalk and granite curbs

Interior:

Floor plan, natural finish woodwork -- all paneling and trim, including the built in circulation desk; plaster walls and ceilings, fireplaces and andirons, stained and leaded glass windows, self-supporting stacks consisting of iron framework with glass floors; chandeliers and sconces; wood floors.

Also important, albeit out of the purview of the Historical Commission, are the furnishings, many original and supplied by the well known Davenport Company, and works of art consisting of paintings, prints, maps. Proper inventorying, care and storage if required is strongly recommended.

Lynne also discussed the preservation restriction which requires character-defining features to be preserved and maintained. This resulted from a preservation grant received by the library about 20 years ago. It is under the jurisdiction of the Mass. Historical Commission. Any work other than maintenance activities require MHC approval. A copy of the preservation restriction is attached to these minutes.

2. **Lifesaving Station** – Brief status report by Lynne Spencer, NHC’s representative on the Lifesaving Station Committee: The Nahant Preservation Trust is planning to apply for a Community Preservation grant to fund the balance needed of the site work along with the replacement of both sets of front steps, now concrete and in poor condition, restoring them to their original appearance based on the original drawings and historic photos, and repointing of the fieldstone foundation.
3. **Nahant Community Center (former Valley Road School):** Lynne reported that a basement waterproofing project is being planned to address the chronic water penetration problems along the Valley Road elevation of the building. Otherwise the building, which is under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission, is functioning well, serving a variety of community needs, administered by the lessee, the Nahant Preservation Trust.
4. **Resignations and need for new members:** Mary Irene Dickinson has resigned after many years of service. Also, the vacancy left by the passing of Richard Adamo is still open. Potential candidates were suggested by the group. Mark agreed to recommend candidates to the Selectmen.
5. Mark Cullinan was voted chair of the Commission.

Minutes prepared by

Lynne Spencer, Clerk