

**Wakefield Historical Commission  
Minutes  
December 13, 2022**

Present: Dan Benjamin, Fran Harrington, Cathlina Driver, Frank Giangregorio, Nancy Bertrand, Chair

Also present: Town Councilor Ed Dombroski.

The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35 p.m.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Dan Benjamin.

In **public participation**, homeowner Cindy Schatz was present concerning the proposed **Demolition of a Historic Structure**. The house in question is at 6 Cordis Street, built by 1841. The existing building represents two distinct parts: the ell was constructed around 1790 and was the home of a woman of color, Mary Courtney, and originally stood on the west side of Main Street opposite Wave Avenue. The ell of the building is called the Jonathan Emerson cottage. It was moved to this location and joined to the present structure when it was owned by Mr. Nicols, a cobbler and jobber for locally produced shoes, who used the structure as a shoe shop. The Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed demolition of the structure at its meeting on January 24th.

The **Minutes** of the previous meeting, which had been emailed to the Commission Members, were reviewed and accepted as presented.

The Commission's **Annual Budget** was reviewed. It is generally \$2000 per year, which basically covers the publication of the public notices for the purpose of the Demolition Delay Bylaw. Chair Nancy Bertrand proposed an increase to \$4000 for the upcoming year so that the Commission might be able to take on a preservation project. Councilor Dombroski wondered whether there might be creative ways in order to fund some Commission projects in the future. He will speak to Town Administrator Steve Maio and Accountant Kevin Gill.

**The Soldiers and Sailors Monument restoration was discussed. Councilor Bob Vincent had introduced the complete restoration as a possible project for ARPA funds.** The first step in the restoration would be a re-assessment of the condition of the Monument, since the last formal assessment was done in 2007. Councilor Dombroski firmly supported at least \$10,000 in ARPA funds to carry out the assessment, and, if more funds for the assessment are needed, he believed they could be found in the ARPA funds. Nancy reported that the conservators from Daedalus Conservation, who had done the original assessment, will be coming to Wakefield on December 28th in order to update the original assessment, under the supervision of the DPW.

The subject of the repair and restoration of the **Bandstand** was mentioned. The WCNA and the DPW are currently evaluating the preservation needs of the iconic structure. All concerned are dedicated to a complete repair and faithful restoration.

In Other Matters, Nancy has received a **letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission** regarding the land to be used as a site for the new location for the Vocational Technical High School. During the Commission meeting in September, several residents had used the Public Participation portion of the Commission meeting to ask whether an

archaeological assessment of this land had been done. Nancy had written to the MHC and the response was that no assessment had been carried out.

**Maintaining the historic character of the community.** Much of the Commission's business during the past several years has concerned the demolition of historic structures. Fran wondered whether something could be done to deter the demolition of historic structures in order to build much larger buildings, especially in established neighborhoods. An equally concerning trend is the 'updating' of historic structures which destroys historic character. Councilor Dombroski wondered whether the Commission could or should have a role during the Board of Appeals process, or during the Facade Improvement program in business districts, being done in conjunction with the Sign Bylaw. Perhaps the Commission should have the opportunity to comment on proposed modifications to historic structures. Dan wondered if the cobblestones removed from under Albion Street might be used somewhere downtown to highlight our historic past.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.** The next meeting will be on January 24th.