



New Bedford Historical Commission

October 5, 2015 – 6:01 PM - **Minutes**

Ashley Room, City Hall, 133 William Street New Bedford, MA

Members Present:

Diana Henry, Chairman
Bill King, Vice Chairman
Jennifer Clarke
Bill Barr
Jennifer Clarke
Janine da Silva
James Lopes
Corey Pacheco

Secretary:

Anne Louro

Members Absent:

Keri Cox
Meghan Kish

1. Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., confirming a quorum. The Chair indicated that J. Lopes would serve in the primary Historical Organization position, J. Clarke would serve in the primary Planning Division position, and Bill Barr would serve in the primary Architect position.

2. Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2015 minutes with any necessary corrections was moved by B. Barr and seconded by J. Clarke. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

A motion to take the matter of the New Business out of order was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- **Daniel Ricketson Shanty Site, Brooklawn Park**

A. Louro presented information to the Commission, explaining that the New Bedford Park Board had concerns regarding the long term preservation and maintenance of the excavation site and requested technical advice and review of the concept by the New Bedford Historical Commission. A. Louro summarized the timeline of the excavation site, dating back to 2012. Carl Simmons, a private resident has researched the history of Brooklawn Park, its association to Daniel Ricketson and advocated and received permission from the Park Board to excavate the site of Ricketson's shanty. Mr. Simmons engaged the services of a professional archeologist, M. Holly Herbster, RPA, and received proper state permits for the excavation. A. Louro outlined the historical significance of the site due to its association with Ricketson, a person of local notoriety who published the first history on New Bedford. She also outlined Ricketson's close association and friendships with 19th century literary notables Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Amos Bronson Alcott and their documented 1 visits to Brooklawn; specifically to Ricketson's Shanty. A. Louro explained that the excavation is complete and that the site is to be preserved by grading and leveling the site to support the foundation stones and leave the top course

exposed. Mr. Simmons also plans to construct a retaining seating wall and install an interpretive wayside panel.

J. da Silva asked where Ricketson's original homestead was located and A. Louro informed her that it was located on Elm Street, but no longer stands. J. da Silva noted that the Shanty site at Brooklawn is the only extant property of Ricketson's.

C. Simmons explained that the site is an educational opportunity for the site and the City as a whole. Ms. Herbster noted that a written report is required to be submitted to MHC once the excavation is complete and the report will be available to the public.

B. Barr asked if the Commission would be commenting on the design of the retaining wall and A. Louro explained that the purview of the NBHC was related to the historical significance of the site, as well as the preservation and interpretation plan presented by Mr. Simmons and Ms. Herbster. Ms. Herbster stated that in her experience, the proposed concept plan provided a compromise of protection and public accessibility of the site.

A motion to send a letter of recommendation to the Park Board from the NBHC endorsing the proposed plan presented by Mr. Carl Simmons and Ms. Holly Herbster, RPA, for the long-term preservation, maintenance and interpretation of the Daniel Ricketson Shanty Site at Brooklawn Park was moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. King. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business:

Violation Notice Protocols

J. Clarke updated members regarding DPHCD's development of violation protocols and systems to be utilized by the NBHC. She explained the different violation scenarios, how they would be handled, and the timeframes in which they would be executed. She went further to explain that template letters were to be drafted and be utilized in the appropriate scenario and that this would provide clarity and consistency to both the board and to the property owner. J. Clarke indicated that the Solicitor's Office was reviewing the violation protocol and that the violation process would be an internal process handled by DPHCD staff and that the new system would be utilized moving forward. There was brief discussion related to the use of the new violation protocol on further actions related to recent past violations, and Commission members discussed timelines, potential fines and court actions that may be applicable. The Commission was informed that a cease and desist, stop work order from DIS was a mechanism also available to the Commission for egregious violations. Commission members were in consensus that the developed violation protocol would aid in compliance and is the preferable system to utilize moving forward once the details are resolved.

Whaling Museum Catering

Commission members discussed an email which James Russell had sent as a status report following the opening of the new Education Center. One of the matters Mr. Russell addressed within the email was the catering truck location on N. Water Street. A. Louro stated that the truck and its location was not under the purview of the Commission and suggested if members still had concerns with the truck and its location, that the NBHC refer the matter once again to the Health Board.

Whaling Museum Ductwork

Commission members discussed the exposed ductwork that exists on the roofs of the N. Water Street buildings and visible from the east side of the museum. A. Louro updated members on her communications with James Russell and the architect regarding a future meeting with the NBHC. She anticipated that the architect would be providing materials such as drawings and photographs related to

the modification of the ductwork for the commission members to review.

District Outreach

Commission members briefly discussed sending a letter to District property owners directing them to the Commission webpage and the link to the District Design Guidelines.

5. Communications:
 - A. Louro briefed member on a Section 106 Review for the new SMAST building located at S. Rodney French Boulevard, which the NBHC commented that there was no adverse effect to the nearby historic resources.
6. Date of Next Meeting: The next regular commission meeting was scheduled for 11.02.15.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by B. King and seconded by J. Lopes. All voted in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Louro
Secretary to the Commission
Approved: 11.02.15