

HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES MONDAY AUG 25, 2014

Attending: Dave Despres, Chris Richard, Gail Isaksen, Pat Bernard, Gary Lavolette, Wayne Oliviera, Vicki Paquette, Bob Espindola. Historical Society President Ricky Goytizolo, Historical Society member Deb Almeida, and other members of the public.

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

Commission Chairman Despres read the following statement; I have called this meeting in order that the Historical Commission may attempt to address issues that have been raised by both the Tourism Director and the Historical Society relative to the shared use of the Academy building. The Tourism office was located here by a decision of the Board of Selectmen. The Historical Society maintains a museum here, for the benefit of the Town, likewise by a decision of the Board of Selectmen. It is not the intention of the Historical Commission to alter or second guess decisions made by that elected Board. It is however our duty, as stewards of the Academy, to offer our advise and guidance as to the best use of this historic structure. Therefore, with that in mind, I ask for a civil discussion to begin, with the goal being that both the Office of Tourism and the Historical Society may coexist and best serve both the citizens of, and visitors to, the Town of Fairhaven.

Mr. Richard started the discussion by stating that until the past few months, the relationship between him and members of the Society have been positive with Mr. Richard loaning an exhibit to the Society. Mr. Richard stated that recently, however, he has received complaints regarding both the mannequin he has displayed in the classroom, and the storage of pamphlets in the same classroom. Mr. Richard further stated that the mannequin has been moved and covered with a drape.

Mr. Goytizolo requested that the mannequin and storage be removed stating that the Society has cleaned the room in the past, and that the mannequin has frightened people.

Mr. Richard countered that other museums and historic sites use mannequins for display purposes.

Mr. Lavolette stated that he is not satisfied with the Society's displays and that the upstairs exhibits could be better. Mr. Lavolette further stated that the Office of Tourism is more important than the Society, and suggested that the Period Room be relocated upstairs.

Mr. Goytizolo countered that the Selectmen agreed to keep the Period Room intact, that Mr. Richard has consulted with him on the formation of it, and that the Society has limited funds to purchase better display cases.

Mr. Richard argued that he has 2/3 of the space he had in the Center of town, and that he has limited space to store his materials.

Mr. Despres asked if perhaps the Period Room could be moved upstairs.

Mr. Goytizolo countered that that should be a decision of the Board of Selectmen, that he was concerned that in the future they would lose even more space.

Mr. Lavolette stated that the Society is a tenant, with others in attendance questioning whether Tourism should move back to the Center.

Mr. Espindola stated that Mr. Richard convinced the Selectmen that the Tourism Office would benefit from the Period Room and that the move to the Academy would raise the level of tourism in town. Mr. Espindola asked for proposals from the Society, Commission, and Tourism as to use of the building.

Mr. Lavolette stated that the only reason the Commission has become involved in this discussion is that issues have been raised regarding the Commission meeting at the building, particularly in the classroom.

Mr. Despres stated that the Commission meets at the Academy in order to ascertain on a regular basis, the condition of the building, and that the Commission has also met adjourned to the Fire Museum to view the condition of that building as well.

Mr. Espindola asked again whether the Society would relocate the Period Room to the upstairs, with Mr. Goytizolo answering that the room represents a Fairhaven parlor, and that people like the room.

Mr. Oliviera stated that the Tourism office sacrificed space to accommodate the Society, that the Society doesn't have a "deed" to the building, and that the Society shouldn't be vandalizing Tourism property.

Mr. Oliviera further stated that the Society is impeding Town use of the building.

Mr. Espindola asked Mr. Richard if he needed the Period Room as additional space and what he would do with it.

Mr. Richard answered that he would like to display items manufactured in Fairhaven and that he would be able to move the items currently stored in the classroom. He further stated that the room could be used as a meeting space for all groups involved.

Ms. Bernard expressed frustration with the friction between the groups and questioned if the Commission could meet elsewhere, a suggestion also raised by Ms. Isaksen.

Mr. Espindola asked that the proposals be what would best benefit the Town, and also suggested that meetings could be held upstairs.

Mr. Despres asked Mr. Goytizolo if his Board would support moving the Period Room.

A discussion ensued between Mr. Richard and a member of the Society regarding his move to the Academy and whether he should move to the Town Hall.

The meeting ended with Mr. Richard angrily stating that the Society has free use of the building.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm