

TOWN OF TAUNTON
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**Historical Commission
August 3, 2022**

Present: Wayne Oliveira, Gary Lavalette, Michael Kelly, Natalie Mello, John Medeiros, David Braga and Selectman Keith Silvia
Absent: M.J. Carvalho, Vicki Oliveira and Gail Isakesen

Mr. Oliveira opened the meeting at 6:34 pm.

Minutes

Mr. Braga made a motion to approve the minutes of June 1, 2022 Mr. Lavalette seconded. Ms. Mello abstained. Vote carried.

Financial Report

Mr. Oliveira reviewed the FY23 financial amounts for the Commission and the balances remaining in each account.

Signing of the bills

Members signed the monthly commission's

Correspondence

Mr. Oliveira has received notice from the Town Clerk that Mr. Lavalette's term has expired as the Historical Commission representative on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Silvia made a motion to appoint Mr. Lavalette as the Historical Commission representative to the CPC Second by Mr. Kelley. Vote was unanimous.

The Commission has received a letter from the Mass, Historical Commission (Attachment A) regarding the proposed changes at the Town Hall. Mr. Oliveira read the letter that was addressed to Ms. Ellison, Fairhaven Town Administrator stating that she may make some alterations at Town Hall, including moving the counter in the former Collector's Office and adding a dutch door to the new space occupied by the Select Board.

Chairman's report

Mr. Oliveira updated the Commission about the bridge plaque stating that Rex Monument will not have enough time to install the plaque. Tootell Monument does not feel they have the staff or machinery for this type of project. DiBonoco Monument in Taunton feels they can take on the installation of the plaque. The plaque is larger than the opening therefore companies are not confident in the installation, due to having to cut into the existing granite.

Mr. Lavalette has cleaned the graffiti and cleared brush at Fort Phoenix around the parapet.. He has also painted the carriage on the cannons. Mr. Oliveira thanked Mr. Lavalette for his hard work.

Mr. Oliveria said Mr. Lavalette also facilitated some electrical repairs at the Fort.

A mockup of the facade for the bell was placed at Town Hall recently by members of The Bell Committee. Several residents and members of the Bell Committee worked together to come up with the final location that will be presented to the Select Board.

Mr. Oliveria has painted and installed new shutters at the Washington Street Firehouse. There were also flags installed on the Washington Street and Spring Street firehouses.

Mr. Oliveira said he has concerns regarding the proposed moves in Town Hall, although it is not the concern of the Commission for office moves the historical artifacts are. Mr. Oliveira said there is an original counter in the new Select Board office (former Collector's Office) that is now proposed to be moved. This counter has the decorative woodwork the same as throughout the Town Hall and Mr Oliveira fears the counter will not survive a move from office to office as this is not being done by professional movers. This counter served as the counter when the Post Office was in Town Hall back in 1894, Mr. Oliveira urged residents to speak out if they are not happy with these proposed changes. The Historical Commission has no purview over office locations but the Historical Commission does have to protect the buildings. Members would like to try to pinpoint a date as to when the cabinet was built. The counter could be seen better in the new location. Ms. Mello knows an antique dealer who deals in furniture and will reach out for some guidance.

Mr. Oliveira said there has been some discussion about Rogers School; the Historical Commission will keep watching because depending on the outcome of the school, this could fall under the Commission's responsibility.

Mr. Oliveira said there is a Code of Conduct bylaw that is being proposed by the Select Board for all Boards and Committees. The Town Administrator will be holding a public hearing for input. Mr. Oliveira is urging the Commission members to look at it and voice your opinion before this goes to Town Meeting.

Academy

Mr. Oliveria reported that the back door is almost finished. Mr. Lavalette said the toilet in the academy is in need of being replaced and he has offered to install the new toilet at no cost. Mr. Medeiros is looking at getting a granite hitching post to put in front of the ramp to help prevent someone from driving into it. The post will look like an old hitching post. All materials will be donated to the town.

Ms. Mello made a motion to allow Mr. Medeiros to continue with this hitching post project. Mr. Braga seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Fire Museum

Mr. Braga said the building is in need of painting but overall is fine. Mr. Lavalette has not heard from Signature signs but will follow up for the next meeting.

Spring Street Firehouse

The painter that was lined up has moved out of State and Mr. Oliveira is reaching out to another company.

Mr. Oliveira suggested the Historical Commission dedicate the Spring Street Firehouse in memory of John Rogers Jr. for all his dedication to the antique fire trucks. Mr. Oliveira reminded the Members that Mr. Rogers took care of the fire truck like it was his own. Mr. Oliveira said Mr. Rogers was one of the driving forces of the museum. The designation would be the backside of the building over the door. Mr. Braga suggested speaking with the family to have a write up about Mr. Rogers to have at the museum on display..

Mr. Braga made a motion to dedicate the Spring Street Firehouse to John Rogers Jr. Ms. Mello seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Fort Phoenix

Mr. Lavalette said there are now more electrical outlets in assorted areas at Fort Phoenix. Mr. Lavalette has purchased some paint for the parapet wall and is looking for volunteers to help in the spring. Mr. Lavalette also noted that if there is anyone looking for a community service project the cannons are in need of painting.

Mr. Medeiros asked if there could be a flag for a branch of the service flown at Fort Phoenix on the flagpole at the entrance. Mr. Medeiros would like to see a flag for each branch on the birthday and possibly have a small ceremony to commemorate each event. Members would like to reach out to the Town Veterans Agent for input. A discussion ensued regarding the flag/banner policy that the town has adopted. Mr. Oliveira will contact the Town Administrator regarding the flag policy and if this applies to the flagpole at Fort Phoenix.

Old Stone School House

Mr. Medeiros said he has gone into the old stone school house recently and The Lions club would like to volunteer and clean it up. Mr. Medeiros would like to write a letter to see if there could be some volunteers to come in and open the building on Saturdays so members of the public can see the inside. Mr. Oliveira will speak to the Tourism Director, Chris Richard because the Historical Commission only oversees the building and does not provide for the operations of the inside and wanted to make sure the commission is not overstepping. Cotrill brothers oiled the gutters and the painter will be there to paint the stone and the trim work.

Street Lamp Project

Mr. Isaksen, Mr. Silvia and Mr. Oliveira have found a style lamp that will match the Town Hall and is similar to the style that was found in an old photo in front of the Methodist Church at the turn of the century. The style would likely be all black finish and a solid top. Mr. Isaksen will be going before the Board of Public Works and the Planning Board soon. Once school is back in session, the students at New Bedford Voke will be starting work on this project

Committee liaison

Mr. Oliveira said Ms. Carvalho reported that the Lagoa display went very well. Mr. Lavalette said there is not much to report at this time for CPC.

House plaques

Have one house plaque for 10 Oxford street but the application is incomplete and Mr. Oliveira is waiting for them to update it so we can move forward.

Demo delay

There is nothing at this time. Mr. Knowles has contacted Mr. Oliveira about knocking down the house on Huttleston Ave. The house is in tough shape but there is no historical significance to it at this time.

New business

No new business.

Old business

Mr. Lavalette is still working with Signature signs to replicate the sign at Town Hall.

Public comment

Mr. Oliveira turned the gavel over to Vice-Chairman Lavalette at 7:54 pm so that he may speak as a resident.

Mr. Oliveira stated as a lifelong resident and expressed his opposition to the office moves at Town Hall. Mr. Oliveira stated that the office moves are not beneficial to the residents and has created more issues for the elderly and those with disabilities to navigate more stairs and find their way around to each office. Mr. Oliveira is upset to see the proposed addition of a Home Depot dutch door in the entrance to the new Select Board Office (former Collector's Office) and the relocation of the counter that has served that office for more than 100 years. (Attachment B)

Mr. Oliveira took back the gavel at 7:58 pm

Ms. Mello Made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm. Mr. Braga seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Oliveira

Attachments:

- A. Letter from Mass Historical Commission
- B. Mr. Oliveira's statement regarding Town Hall office moves

August 3, 2022

Statement at Historical Commission Meeting

I would like to speak not as the Historical Commission Chair but as a lifelong resident who is not happy with what I see happening in our Town Hall.

The Select Board office had been in their same location since the building was opened in 1894. I went to that very office as a child with my father who was very involved in town politics to watch the Selectmen's meeting. The very table you are sitting at used to be in the center of that room for meeting and to run day to day operations.

One of the Town Administrator's reasons for the move was that it made the Collector's Office more accessible to those with disabilities. In fact it did not. It is actually more difficult for elderly residents to reach that office as it is deeper into the building and requires a few more stairs to get there. If they chose to use the ramp and elevator by going around the back of the building, it is a far longer route to travel to get to the same office. I would challenge any of you to give it a try. The only true reason for this move was that the Town Administrator wanted a bigger office. It doesn't do anything for the residents, It doesn't do anything for the staff and it certainly wasn't beneficial to the building. That former Town Administrator office was used by our past executive secretary Jeffrey Oscuch for 20+ years and our first Town Administrator - Mark Rees used it for his 5 year term. In other words... the office does not make the leader.

As it has been stated this is not personal for me because my wife works in the Select Board Office but it is personal as someone who loves this town and its historical buildings. And it is not about the loss of a window seat as one Select Board member rudely commented.

So today it's moving a historic counter and adding a Home Depot dutch door where the public will have to do their personal business while they stand in the corridor. What will be next?

I won't even get into the unnecessary costs associated with this move.

I recently heard a quote "All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing" Citizens of Fairhaven need to speak out and protect what is ours and save our history and tradition.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 25, 2022

Angelina Lopes-Ellison
Town Administrator
Town of Fairhaven
Fairhaven Town Hall
40 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Re: Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center Street, Fairhaven, MA
Preservation Restriction Review (MGL Chapter 184, ss. 31-33)

Dear Ms. Lopes-Ellison:

Thank you for submitting the information describing the proposed interior alterations to the Fairhaven Town Hall. Fairhaven Town Hall is individually listed in the State Register of Historic Places. The MHC holds a preservation restriction on the Fairhaven Town Hall as the result of grant funding received.

MHC staff has reviewed the project description including annotated photos and written summary. It is understood that the project will include but not be limited to the following: the addition of lighted emergency exit signs in various locations; the relocation of an existing freestanding decorative wood counter to another larger office space including the removal of an existing paneled half wall; the insertion of a new low half-door with a top shelf adjacent to an existing door opening (decorative metal gate to be removed and stored for possible future reuse); the addition of a locked extension onto an existing wood drop box which is built on the inside of an exterior door to facilitate after-hours deliveries; and minor carpentry repairs to existing damaged wood wainscoting in various locations. After review of the submitted proposal, the MHC is agreeable to the project description as presented under the terms of the preservation restriction agreement.

These comments are provided to assist in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 184, Section 31-33 and the terms of the preservation restriction agreement.

If you have questions, please contact me at this office. Please contact the MHC regarding any potential significant project changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Holtz".

Paul Holtz
Historical Architect
Co-Director Grants Division
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Cc: Wayne Oliveira, Fairhaven Historical Commission