

WARREN VOLUNTARY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 24, 2009 Meeting

Warren Town Hall, 2nd Floor

7:00 pm

www.wvhdc.org

Attendees: Edward J. Theberge, John DaSilva, Janet O'Brien, Chris Fuller, Patricia Read, BG (Ret.) Richard J. Valente, Eileen Collins, Town Planner Caroline Wells

Absent: No absentees

Location: Council Chambers, Warren Town Hall

1. Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. New/Review Applicants

a. None

3. New Business

Motion was made to move New Business up on the agenda for a discussion with Town Planner

Caroline Wells. Motion was passed.

a. Ms. Wells introduced herself to the board and stated she was interested in learning how the historic tax credit program works, the

Voluntary Historic District's relationship to the Comprehensive Plan, and its successes and problems, if any.

DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

Gen. Valente said a major problem has been the lack of a "point of contact" at Town Hall, especially since the departure of former Building Official William Hanley. Current Building Official William Nash has never attended a WHDC Meeting and does not assist potential tax credit applicants as Mr. Hanley had, he said. Former Planner Michelle Maher had also assisted applicants as had the Tax Assessor, but no more.

Ms. Wells said that working in the Town Hall she is aware that "not too many people working there are preservationists."

The WVHD Website was also discussed.

Mr. Theberge: "We have an excellent Website. But I challenge you to go to the Town of Warren's Website and find us."

Ms. Wells said at this time the Town's Website is outsourced but that she will be taking over the Website.

There was also discussion concerning the WHDC's efforts at outreach through mailings, educational events and more.

Ms. Read said that the Town of Warren's Voluntary Historic District program is unique and has been successful due, in part, to the efforts of Mr. Theberge and the late Richard O'Brien.

Mr. Fuller said the WVHDC should be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Fuller: “The Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be a vision of the Town. Zoning and Planning are supposed to cater to that.” --- I would suggest that most people associate us with planning and zoning. We should be associated with the Comprehensive Plan.”
Currently, the WVHD is only “vaguely noted” in the Comp Plan, he said.

The condition of properties was discussed.

Ms. Wells said she has has seen a lot of “deferred maintenance as well as beautifully restored homes that anchor neighborhoods.”

She also said she sees a lot of failings in Warren and is especially troubled by the condition of properties in the North End, the entry to the Town. Problems there include cheap vinyl siding and Home Depot fixtures,” she said.

Several members said lack of building code enforcement is also problematic.

Mr. Fuller said he believed there is confusion with the public as to whether the historic

district is or is not regulatory.

Mr. Theberge told Ms. Wells that before he left the Council, Mr. Louis Rego was a

Liaison between the Council and the WHDC. No one on the current Council has yet been appointed.

Ms. Wells outlined several high points of the discussion:

- 1) To have the WVHD mission acknowledged in the Comp. Plan**
- 2) Assign/add a staff liaison**
- 3) More building code enforcement**

4. Old Business

a. Financial Report

Mr. DaSilva reported that \$190.00 was spent in February for the secretary and the Website.

There is \$875.00 in the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The Financial Report

Was approved unanimously.

b. Status Report

The updated Status report was presented. Mr. DaSilva, who updates the report, was

notified that an outstanding application for tax credits from Jeffrey Dalton should be removed from

the OPEN category as his Water Street property is in receivership.

The status report was approved unanimously.

c. Demolition ordinance

Mr. Theberge said he wants the process begun to submit the proposed Demolition Ordinance to the Council After several suggestions as to which Councilor should be asked to submit the document, Mr. Theberge said he would seek Ms. Wells' input.

d. Brochures/mailings

Changes to the brochure were discussed. Ms. Collins pointed out that it is now "mailable." She said she and Mr. Theberge reviewed it and eliminated redundancies which made it clearer and more concise.

Mr. Theberge said a quarter page ad in the Warren Times is \$163.00. An insert was "too cost prohibitive.

To have Tim Pray (TAP Printing) print up and mail the brochures (bulk mail) would cost a maximum \$814 for the printing and mailing. Mr. Theberge said he would have a final figure later in the week.

Mr. DaSilva said that the Rules and Regulations should also be printed.

Ms. Read made the motion to give Mr. Theberge and Ms. Collins the authority to order

the brochures from TAP, using the lowest price, and have them bulk mailed; also

to negotiate the cost of printing rules and regulations. Mr. DaSilva

seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Review of Minutes

There were two corrections to the January 27, 2009 meeting minutes.

(1) Janet O'Brien was

present at the meeting while John DaSilva was absent. (2) Mr. DaSilva did not personally present the Financial Report. The report was presented for him as he was absent.

Gen. Valente made a motion that the minutes be accepted with two amendments. Mr. Theberge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Adjournment

General Valente made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. DaSilva. The Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.