



TOWN OF PLYMPTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Plympton Historical Commission comments provided to the Board of Selectmen - February, 1 2010

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the discussion at last week's Board of Selectmen's meeting.

I have been on the Plympton Historical Commission since its reformation approaching 10 years ago and have served as the Chair since that time. I currently serve as the Historical Commission's representative to the Community Preservation Committee and have been a member of the Web Committee since its inception in 2003. I am not, and have not been a member of the Plympton Historic District Commission.

In my time with the Commission, I have had the privilege to work with a number of talented and dedicated individuals who took their oath very seriously and helped make sure that the Commission fulfilled its duties to the town.

At last week's meeting, there were concerns raised as to whether the Commission acted out of turn during the Site Plan Approval regarding the Plympton Service Center. As the Chair of the Commission I believe it is important that the Board of Selectmen and the public have a clear understanding of the facts surrounding this issue. As such, I would like to note the following:

- The Historical Commission is obligated to review, and if appropriate, comment on plans forwarded to them as part of the commercial Site Plan Review Process.
- The Planning Board is required to consider the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding neighborhood, including the use of different materials and the impact on significant historic properties - see section 6.5 of the site plan rules.
- The 7-member Historical Commission would have acted inappropriately had they not provided comments on the plans provided to them pursuant to Site Plan Review, given that the Plympton Service Center was located immediately adjacent to the National Register eligible district.
- The Historical Commission did not go to the Planning Board hearings to convince the Planning Board to adopt our comments, but rather submitted our comments in written form. These comments can be viewed on the Historical Commission section of the Web site.
- The Historical Commission did not recommend that wood clapboards be used, only that vinyl not be used in high traffic areas - and even recommended the use of vinyl shingles in the low traffic areas.
- The Service Center was not singled out by the Commission for review. The Service Center review followed a series of reviews done as part of the site plan review process for the adjacent Plaza.
- The Historical Commission worked closely with John English, the architect of the Plaza project to address the Commission comments. Those letters can also be found on the Web site.

- The Historical Commission has not reviewed every square inch of Main Street, and has never offered comments with respect to any residential building project, renovation or repair.

- The Historical Commission did not again deal with the Service Center project until early 2009. Following appropriate channels, the Commission contacted the Building Department regarding the vinyl siding as it did not meet the Planning Board's original site plan approval. The Planning Board considered this issue and decided to waive that condition of the site plan. The Commission offered no comment on that decision - and has offered no subsequent comments either.

- The Historical Commission has held over 50 posted meetings since it sent its comments to the Planning Board regarding the Service Center on November 15, 2005. No town officials or residents have come to discuss their concerns or questions regarding the suggestions, or why the Commission submitted the letter.

I would encourage the review of information contained about the Commission on the Web site - including all our comment letters regarding various preservation initiatives. You will find that they are measured, thoughtful and well within the scope of our charter.

The Commission is always willing to attend meetings to help provide clarity surrounding issues of historic planning and preservation or roles of the different Commissions. Had we been contacted, we would have made sure that someone was available.

I am available to discuss any of these issues should that be desired. My contact information is available on the Web site.

Thank you.

Jon Wilhelmsen

Chair, Plympton Historical Commission