

WEST TISBURY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING
MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting: January 24, 2011

Attending: Sean Conley, Mark Mazer, Nancy Dole, Lan McDowell, Ann Fisher, Ben Moore

Also Attending: Tara Whiting, Richard Knabel

Meeting convened at 5:30 PM.

Tara Whiting came to discuss the Whiting homestead, of which she and her brother Daniel are the current owners. They wish to demolish the house and build a new house in the same location, and would begin that process by requesting a certificate of hardship, based on the age and condition of the existing structure. The original house is a cape, circa 1663, built by Josias Standish, one of the original settlers, in 1660, of Tisbury, and an incorporator of the town of West Tisbury in 1673. Josias was the son of Miles Standish, an important figure in American history. The additions to the original structure were built by 1865, the last by Henry Whiting, Tara's great great grandfather. The house has great significance in the town's history, and is an island landmark. The current owners state that it is in severe disrepair, and they do not feel able to do the work needed to preserve it. They feel demolishing it and building a new home would be their best solution.

It is not clear if a hardship that is unique to the property and is not applicable to the rest of the district (which is required by our bylaw) could be considered. The applicant assumes that because the homestead is older than any other structure in the district (Josie Bruno's house on Old County Road is in that era as well) and is in such severe disrepair (their contractor estimated \$1.75 million to restore and did not recommend it), there is a hardship.

Mark Mazer suggested we do some research to see how other districts have handled the issue of a house that is of great historic value to a district, but is beyond repair and/or too costly for the owners to repair. Nancy will contact the Mass Historic Commission Mail Server List, and raise the issue.

There was discussion by the members as to whether the original 1663 cape was more historic than the 1865 additions, and if those additions could be demolished and not replaced, while the original cape could also be demolished, but be replaced by a replica.

There was discussion that perhaps the applicant could build elsewhere on the lot.

The decision was made to schedule a site visit for Saturday the 29th at 10:30 am. The members of the Historic Commission as well as any other interested parties are welcome to attend.

Another informal meeting will be scheduled for February 7th.

Other business:

There have been a number of complaints to the HDC about the rock barrier in front of the town hall, which was built without the approval of the HDC. Mark Mazer made a motion to ask the town to remove the rocks, and to consider planting low hedges instead to keep the cars from parking on the lawn. Motion was 2nded and approved unanimously.

We postponed discussion of a request by Eileen Maley that we designate the Field Gallery a cultural resource to the community which would make it eligible for State CPA funds if the town decided to buy it.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by

Nancy Dole, Secretary