

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

MAY 16, 2011

A workshop of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, William Dial, on Monday, May 16, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, James Deerin, Dorothy Fenwick, and Thomas Costigan.

Mr. Dial stated that the purpose of this workshop was to discuss two issues. The first was the relationship with the Parks and Recreation Committee regarding items to be placed in the historic district. Ms. Litty spoke stating that she and Mrs. Fenwick, who has the greatest tenure with this commission, had worked on a letter that they wanted the commission members to look over and if the commission members were agreeable, be sent to the Commissioners. The letter, in essence, asked that the Historic District Commission be allowed to review any structures or memorials being planned as simply a courtesy for the commission members to give their recommendations. Mrs. Fenwick added that as activities occur, people may want to memorialize those activities and though the commission may not be able to say no to what one wants to do at least they would have the opportunity to see their presentation. Mr. Dial stated that his concern was that another committee is involved which is the Oxford Parks and Recreation Committee and that it is their responsibility to make recommendations to the Commissioners regarding statues so that whatever the Historic Commission does they would need to let the Parks and Recreation Committee know so as not to infringe on that committee's responsibilities and to act on an advisory capacity only. He suggested that when something of this nature is coming up that the commission be notified. Mr. Costigan asked if there was anything the commission did not have jurisdiction over. Mr. Dial responded that the only thing the commission did not have jurisdiction over were commercial/maritime zones. He also thought that signs are really a matter for the Planning Commission but that the historic commission could comment on them. Both Mr. Deerin and Mr. Costigan both pointed out that the zoning ordinance only specifies that the maritime/industrial zone is the only zone within the historic district that the commission has no jurisdiction over. Mr. Dial continued, noting that without impugning anyone, there have been occasions whereby some committees/commissions did things in the historic district that he thought negatively reflected on the historic nature of commission. Mr. Dial then suggested that this be brought up in the next monthly meeting for a vote on the issue. Mr. Deerin pointed out that the Oxford Zoning Ordinance refers to structures in the historic district and that a monument would fall within the definition of a structure. Any structure within the historic district requires a building permit. As such, Mr. Deerin did not think that the commission should give up their position when it looks as though it is actually required under the ordinance. He suggested that maybe the letter be framed in such a way that it says that the commission suggests that because of current jurisdiction over this issue, that there be a joint consideration by Parks and Recreation and the Historic Commission, without saying it is all up to Parks and Recreation. Mr. Deerin suggested that once the town accepts a building permit, that unless it is in a maritime/industrial zone, that under the terms of the ordinance, that

application has to find its way to the historic commission, as well as the Parks and Recreation Committee, if they are involved, and it be treated as a joint consideration application. Mr. Deerin stated he would rewrite the letter and bring it to the next regularly scheduled meeting in June.

The other issue for consideration concerned the house at 512 E. Strand. The owner of the property, out of concern for people breaking into his home, had screwed 2 x 4's across some of his windows and doors. Mr. Dial noted that he had gone to the Town Administrator, Lillian Lord, about it, and she in turn had told him that the property owner had the right to protect his property. Mr. Dial stated this in turn got him thinking about what would happen if someone living in the historic district decided they were going to be gone for some time and they wanted to put plywood over all their windows. What would be the difference between that and the 2 x 4's? Mr. Dial stated that it was his position that the owner of 512 E. Strand should find other means to secure his structure without altering the façade. Mr. Deerin agreed stating that what the property owner had done was an alteration and there is nothing in the zoning ordinance that says one can make changes based on security or protection to one's home. Other members concurred. Mr. Dial stated that since the committee members all agree, it should be brought up at the next month's meeting with a motion that the owner be asked to remove those boards and find another means of securing his home.

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk