

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 1978

Present: Chairman William F. Toomey and John E. Murray.

The statutory requirements as to notice having been fulfilled, the meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Chairman William F. Toomey.

Article 22--Historical Commission/Historic Structures Commission

Present: Floyd Stiles, Jr., Chairman, Anne D. Bigelow, Charlotte Goss, Douglas H. Zanzot, Committee on Town Administration; Forrest D. Bradshaw, Joseph Brown and Russell Kirby, Historical Society.

Chairman Toomey stated that the Board was again meeting with the Committee on Town Administration to discuss Article 22--Historical Commission/Historic Structures Commission - relative to abolishing or combining one of the two committees.

Selectman Toomey referred to a copy of the minutes of the March 27, 1978 meeting of the Committee on Town Administration, indicating that the Commission did confer with Town Counsel, as requested by the Board of Selectmen in their letter of March 20, 1978, to review General Laws, Chapter 4, section 4, a provision to rescind the action creating the Historical Commission, and that Town Counsel had advised the Committee on Town Administration that under said statute, it would be impossible to abolish the Historical Commission, at this time, under an Act of said General Laws, but that the Historic Structures Commission could be dissolved by Town Meeting vote and its duties and responsibilities be transferred to the Historical Commission.

Chairman Floyd Stiles stated that the Committee on Town Administration had prepared their final report on Article 22, which he read, and that a motion had been drafted in concurrence with Town Counsel, as above-mentioned, and recommended that the Selectmen agree that the article be moved in this way in the best interest of the Town.

Executive Secretary Richard E. Thompson stated that initial discussion of this article started about four years ago, but the Selectmen had never received any indication of how the Town felt this matter should be handled. Recently, however, the consideration of consolidating the two committees has been studied by the Committee on Town Administration and they submitted a report and recommendation to the Board as requested. Based on the same, the Board of Selectmen now wished to determine an appropriate motion for action by this Annual Town Meeting.

Mrs. Anne D. Bigelow, Committee on Town Administration, asked the Executive Secretary the main reason for holding this proposed article.

Mr. Thompson responded that during the last four years, no one showed an interest in being appointed to the Historical Commission or the Historic Structures Commission; in fact, he stated, those on the Historic Structures Commission expressed a desire to resign. He further stated, however, that in the last six months, and since the Selectmen decided to insert Article 22 in the Warrant, there have been 4-5 recommendations for appointment to the Historical Commission; 8-10 persons recommended by the Talent Search Committee, and several women

recommended by Mr. Richard C. Hill of the Historic Structures Commission, in his letter dated June 28, 1977. Mr. Thompson said that the Board has reviewed the names of the candidates for appointment, but decided to hold off on the appointments until Town Meeting voted on Article 22.

Mr. Stiles reported that under Article 11 of the 1968 Annual Town Meeting it was voted to accept the provisions of Chapter 40, section 8D to establish a Historical Commission of five members.

Mr. Forrest D. Bradshaw, Ancient Documents Committee, confirmed this, and stated that he had written and read the motion at the time (1968).

Mr. Stiles stated that the general opinion of townspeople expressed to the Committee on Town Administration is that the persons appointed to the Historical Commission for the maintenance of the historic preservation of these structures in town should have unique historical expertise. Mr. Stiles expressed some concerns of the Historic Structures Commission in that they have not yet been notified to become involved in conjunction with the maintenance of the Hosmer House.

The Executive Secretary stated regarding membership that, if the Town accepts Section 8D of Chapter 40, as stated in the proposed motion by the Committee on Town Administration (and as accepted in Article 11 of the 1968 Annual Town Meeting), it will be set forth that the Commission will not have less than three nor more than seven members. Further addressing what Mr. Stiles said, Mr. Thompson stated that there is nothing being done at the Hosmer House, at this time, requiring expertise in historical preservation, and that Town Counsel has been requested to notify the Board as to the procedure to be followed in accordance with the agreement of the will.

Mr. Stiles summed up what he meant, by saying that the historical value of these structures (such as Hosmer House and Loring Parsonage) should be monitored regularly by qualified people.

Mr. Thompson responded that one way this monitoring has been accomplished is in the recent action of updating the value of the insurance coverage on the Hosmer House, as indicated was necessary by the Insurance Advisory Committee.

Mr. Stiles recommended that the Selectmen do not vote indefinite postponement on Article 22 because, in his opinion, the Historical Commission should not remain with a sole member, as it has over the past three years. He suggested that the Town have a chance to determine what should be done about these two committees. He stated that their motion to dissolve the Historic Structures Commission, which he read, would relieve the Board of Selectmen and their staff from the overall responsibilities of worrying about the historical structures in town, but suggested that it be the decision of the Selectmen to appoint the members to the committee who would be best qualified.

Town Counsel Paul L. Kenny suggested one legal change in the motion.

Mrs. Bigelow suggested the possibility of grants from foundations for the preservation of history under State and Federal funding for use by the Historical Commission on all historical structures in Town.

Selectman Toomey recommended that both committees be consolidated.

Selectman Murray recommended indefinite postponement until after the June 5th Special Election at which time there would be a full Board.

Mr. Stiles indicated that, if the Town Meeting votes to keep the two committees, he would like to be assured that the Selectmen appoint the necessary members to complete the Historical Commission.

Mr. Thompson stated that the only reason the appointments have not been made to date is because of the pending article.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that he realized that nothing could be done relative to the Hosmer Estate until Miss Florence Hosmer passed away, but recommends that complete plans get underway immediately for the Hosmer Estate, and that this was a point of discussion three years ago at a meeting regarding the same.

Selectman Toomey stated that once the inventory is completed, the Board of Selectmen would recommend to the Town that a complete plan be implemented for the Estate of Florence Hosmer. Mr. Toomey further stated that Town Counsel will report on the legalities involving the Estate, and that, in the meantime, the Board has provided for the securing of the building (Hosmer House).

Chairman Toomey stated that the Board will take this matter under further advisement.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Attest:

Richard E. Thompson
Executive Secretary-Clerk