

**Fellows House Demolition Public Hearing
January 3, 2011 7:30 Town Hall**

Present: J.Parsons; K.Normington N.Kopec; C.Pynn; C. Webber

Attny William Mason representing Mesiti Indian Rock Road LLC

Thirty-three members of the public were also present

Chair, C.Pynn opened the meeting at 7:30 pm

The Chair then explained the duties of the Heritage Commission. The charge of the commission is to survey and document historical and cultural resources in Windham Also to assist the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment in the review those portions of the Master Plan which address historical resources. Duties are non-regulatory but are advisory. A brief introduction of the project was given:

The applicant, Mesiti Indian Rock Road, LLC has requested a demolition permit for the house and barn at 21 Indian Rock Rd lot 11-A-570. The property is on the Town Historic Resource List and therefore falls under the Demolition Delay Ordinance. This ordinance requires a 30 day delay for public input before the permit is issued. *The house and barn are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as one of the best preserved farm complexes in Windham*

The applicant was represented by Atty William Mason.

Mr. Mason was invited to give an outline of the project. He stated he was not aware of any plans for the property once the buildings were removed.

The Commission asked Mr. Mason:

- Why does Mr. Mesiti want the buildings demolished if there is no plan for the lot.
- Have any variances been applied for
- If one use of the lot is to be for an access to the Village Center District, has the DOT been notified.

Mr. Mason was not informed by the applicant to address these questions

Mr. Mason stated that Mr. Mesiti has offered the buildings to the Town for \$1.00 but the buildings must be moved within 120 days.

The Public was then asked to give comments. Ten people from the public spoke regarding the project.

Some of the comments

Kathleen DiFruscia, Frank Farmer and Kathryn Luther feel that the Town Center is part of the heart of the Town and makes a historic Town Center. Ms. DiFruscia thinks that it is time for the applicant to give back to the town. Mr. Farmer asked for clarification regarding the National Register and the significance for the Fellows House Jonathon Sycamore asked if Mr. Mesiti had ever worked to preserve an historic building in Town.

Mr. Ryan, Ms. Dunn and Mr. Mazaliewski had concerns regarding the Village Center District Ordinance. The ordinance was written to protect historic buildings within the

district.. Ms Dunn feels the ordinance is not being adhered to. Mr. Ryan feels there should be a way to preserve the house/barn. Pete Lisan spoke in favor of preserving the barn.

Becky Brown stated that 120 days is not enough time to move the buildings. Also the town budget has already been set.

Kristi St.Laurent stated that she understands that old houses have challenges but the location is part of its history and character of the town. We need rational reason for demolition.

All speakers are in favor of preserving the buildings in place. It was also stated that many of the historic elements of the buildings would be lost by moving the house.

After everyone from the public had spoken, public discussion was closed.

The applicant was invited to take questions from the Commission. Mr. Mason was again asked what was planned for the lot if the buildings were removed. Mr. Mason stated he knows nothing of any plans.

The Commission discussed ramifications of the proposed demolition.

Ms Webber stated that in the past that developers had always worked with the Commission to mitigate intrusion into historic areas and she discussed a number of preservation projects in Town such as: London Bridge (a Section 106 project) Armstrong Building; Haseltine House and depot as well as the Common Man buildings. The commission also worked with the State DOT to re-build and preserve the historic stone bridge on Cobbetts Pond Road. Changes to buildings in the town center Historic District. Mr. Parsons was concerned regarding any variances that might be required for the property and Section 106 which protects historic buildings that would be impacted by State Highway projects. The owner would be fined if he was aware that this section might be invoked.

C.Pynn stated that the Town Center was originally composed of the houses that presently line Indian Rock Road (Rt 111) from the town hall complex to Hardwood Rd.

The vision of the new Village Center District was marketed to the people as something different from what is now becoming. It destroys the original village. The Village Center District Ordinance was intended to protect the historic buildings and re-use when possible. The Fellows House has been determined to be useable for light public volume.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted in draft form and have not been accepted by the Commission

Carol Pynn

Chair, Windham HDC/HC

