

Duxbury Clipper

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

"Believe those who are seeking the truth. Doubt those who find it." - Andre Gide

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Questions on demolition

Simmons House owner explains decision to apply for permit

By JONATHAN PAPPALARDO
CLIPPER REPORTER

Should a 12-month demolition delay be granted for the Isaac Simmons House? The Historical Commission will turn that question over to the public on Oct. 16.

The unanimous decision came during the Commission's Sept. 18 meeting, in which they made official what they said on Oct. 4, which is that the home at 761 Temple

St. is indeed historic. This means, according to their by-laws, they can hold a public hearing and, depending on the outcome, vote at another time on whether to grant the 12-month delay.

The Commission forged ahead with the meeting despite the decision by the Board of Selectmen to reverse their decision to reject their right

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RUNNING AWAY WITH IT: Griffin Vaughan still has gas in his tank after completing four laps of the Percy Walker Pool and three laps of Train Field at the Duxbury Student Union's Splash and Dash, Saturday. Eva MacDermott is hot on his heels. See more photos on page 21.

Photo by Deni Johnson

Duxbury FACTS begins fifth year

By MARTHA HIMES RIEGELHAUPT
CLIPPER REPORTER

Vaping didn't exist when Duxbury FACTS was formed, but now it is on the non-profit's front burner.

Duxbury Families, Adolescents and Community Together Against Substances is entering its fifth year of

helping residents, especially school-age children, learn to function in the world without leaning on alcohol, drugs or e-cigarettes.

Their fall program for the 2019-2020 school year will be held Tuesday, Oct.

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History where it happened

Play at First Parish offers a glimpse into a critical moment in the history of Duxbury's waterfront

By MATTHEW NADLER
CLIPPER EDITOR

It's a frequently asked question by visitors to the King Caesar House, but the answer opens up a whole window into the creation of Duxbury.

How did Ezra Weston, and also his son, Ezra Weston II, get the nickname King Cae-

sar? The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society aims to answer that question with a play, "How King Caesar Got His Nickname," written by former DRHS Director Patrick Browne, which will be performed Saturday at First Parish Church.

The play was first per-

formed at last year's Duxbury Maritime Festival and got a good reaction, DRHS Director Erin McGough said. The cast of amateur thespians, "just owned it." The DRHS decided to do an encore, but this time

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Historical Commission looks for demolition answers on Temple Street

Continued from page 1

of first refusal on the property. The town has the opportunity to buy the property because it was classified as agricultural land under state law and has been subject to a lower tax rate than residential or commercial land.

Commission members also heard from the seller, Nathan Harrington, who explained why the purchase and sales agreement he entered into with Jonathan Buchman, of Banner Construction in Wayland, calls for a full demolition of the home even though neither he nor Buchman have stated their intent to demolish the house.

As Harrington explained, “I signed an agreement that stipulated I apply for the demolition and at this point I am in an agreement and I intend to see it through. That’s the main reason why I’m doing this. Obviously, it’s with mixed emotions, no one wants to tear down their family house, necessary, especially one that’s so old. But I made that decision and now I’m in an agreement. I’d like to see it pursued.”

Harrington went on to add, “That was a contingency put in that I came to terms with. As you know, the buyer has stated he doesn’t want to tear it down.”

When asked by Commission member Nicole Walters if he could “push back” against the stipulation, Harrington said he would prefer “not to get into a legal situation.”

Commission member Arthur Evans pointed out that Buchman had declined the commission’s invite to attend the meeting.

Commission member Shelia Lynch-Benttinen said it’s beyond the capacity of the Historical Commission to appropriately determine whether or not the agreement Harrington has entered into with Buchman is legal or not, and the best course of action is “let the lawyers” figure it out.

Lynch-Benttinen also pointed out their unanimous decision to hold the public hearing doesn’t give Harrington the “greenlight to sign the P&S with Mr. Buchman” and close on the property. Harrington replied, “I don’t think you have to worry. There’s a few other contingencies on his side that I suspect will take a while.”

Harrington went on to tell Commission members, “I do not envy the position that you’re in to deal with this. I think you didn’t necessarily anticipate how a lot of this would progress but we find ourselves here.”

After the decision to hold the public hearing on Oct. 16 was unanimously approved, Lynch-Benttinen asked Harrington about the history of the property. Harrington explained it was his grandfather who purchased the property back in the early 1930s.

“There was a back-pasture right behind the house and a side pasture you may be fa-

miliar with,” he said. “The furthest pasture was actually cleared by my mom right after I graduated from college. That had all been forest as you head toward Amado Way. Most of the forest, at least as I understand it, there’s a lot more now than there used to be because they used to clear it for animals. That gradually diminished and so reclaiming it back as pasture is actually a new thing.”

In a separate discussion during the meeting, they approved a motion that would allow Lynch-Benttinen to fill out paperwork to nominate the 761 Temple St property for the National Historic Register. They also agreed to take it up for consideration at their next meeting on Oct. 2.

Lynch-Benttinen said the last page of the MACRIS papers for the house brings up the idea of the nomination, which can be done either by the homeowner or the Historical Commission. “I just think as a white flag as the ship is sinking, we should nominate this property for the National Historic Register as a first period house in Massachusetts, with its existing pasture, even if Mr. Buchman is going to bulldoze it down.”

She explained most of the historical information has already been filled out in the MACRIS and they would take care of the rest. It would simply be an acknowledgement the property is historic and not prevent Buchman from mov-

ing forward with his plans.

Harrington, who had seen the MACRIS for the first time earlier that day, said he saw what she was talking about and established they don’t actually need his permission to move forward. An attendee at the meeting said Harrington’s mom knew about the possibly of nominating the property and refused because it wouldn’t change anything.

Harrington, who said he isn’t legally allowed to comment on the National Historic Register nomination, confirmed at the meeting he will be in attendance for the public hearing on Oct. 16.

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See Duxbury's newest trail

Duxbury 2020 will be dedicating the Green’s Harbor Interpretative Path, located in the North Hill Marsh Conservation area, on Sunday, Oct. 6, at 12:15 p.m. English settlers used the path, first defined by Native Americans, as early as 1623. There will be a ribbon cutting and blessing of the trailhead. The trailhead improvements were completed under the direction of Jack Champagne as part of his Eagle Scout project and the interpretive signs marking the path were designed and installed by the Duxbury Conservation Department and Duxbury 2020. Following the ribbon cutting, join local historians Patrick Browne and Tony Kelso, and Conservation Administrator Joe Grady on a guided walk along the path.

Meet at the trailhead located behind First Parish Church at 842 Tremont St.

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