

## *Royalston Historic District Commission*

*September 13, 2001*

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Chairman Patience Bundschuh. Members in attendance were Patience, Andy West, Bob Casinghino, John Divoll, Richard Corser, Jodie Brighenti, Rick Carrier, and Brenda Putney.

This was a special meeting called to discuss the September 5th newspaper article, in which it was reported that the Board of Selectmen had ordered the removal of the fence surrounding the Bastille/Perkin's Parsonage. It was noted by Patience that the Commission has not received any communication from the Board of Selectmen regarding the removal of the fence.

Patience handed out copies of the newspaper article in which the removal order was reported, and also a copy of a letter drafted by herself which she hopes to send to the Selectmen along with a request for the Commission to be given time on the agenda to address the matter of the fence. Patience explained that the Selectmen to have the authority to take action regarding safety hazards, but she is not sure why this action was taken with no communication with the commission. The fence has been deemed important, and was added to the National Historic Register for that property. Therefore the H.D.C. should have some say in the decision to remove the fence. By-passing the Commission makes the fence more of an issue. The question was asked as to what our job is as a commission if the Selectmen take action on issues without consulting us.

Andy has talked to Mass. Historic Commission regarding the action taken by the Selectmen, M.H.C. made the point that this issue is unique, as most Selectboards are very supportive of their historic commissions.

Patience stated that this is about procedure, and even if the Selectmen are correct in deeming the fence unsafe, some communication should have been received by the commission.

It was pointed out that the Building Inspector is supposed to be the one who we work with to determine if something is unsafe. Patience did speak with Geoff, and reported that the Selectmen did in fact contact him on the matter, but he also stated that the fence doesn't fall under his jurisdiction because of the definition of a "structure". <sup>building codes</sup> (B.P.)

It was pointed out that Chris Skelly from Mass. Historic Commission stated that the Building Inspector is usually the enforcement officer for H.D.C.s. Geoff is zoning by-law enforcement officer, but said he didn't think he was the enforcement officer for the H.D.C. This question needs to be clarified. It is pertinent that the Commission has a good working relationship with the Building Inspector whether or not he is enforcement officer.

Andy stated that Chris Skelly also said that an Historic District Commission can vote to clarify by-laws at their meetings. Patience suggested that everyone should take a good look at the by-laws to see if we feel that we do need to clarify anything.

Review of the letter:

Patience stated that the Selectmen should use the Public Safety Law when it is necessary, but if there is going to be a Commission and by-laws, then due process is in order.

The Letter was read and reviewed by all. Some changes were made to the original, to clarify specifics on the public hazard issue, and the issue of the removal of the section of fence which the Selectmen had removed previous to this present action. The question was asked as to whether or not Town Counsel looked at the Historic District by-laws when advising on the fence issue, or if the original easement given to Calvin Bullock was the only consideration in their decision on the matter. Dick pointed out that the H.D.C. is another entity, new to when the authorization was given for the fence.

Bob made a motion to send the letter as amended. Dick seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

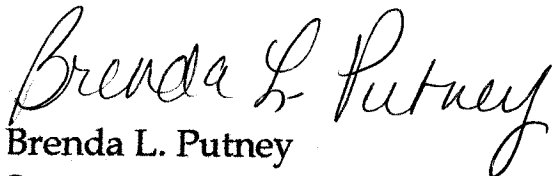
Patience will send out the letter tomorrow, so that we may have a chance to be on the agenda for Tuesday's meeting.

The next meeting of the H.D.C. will be on Thursday September 20. Elections will be held at that meeting. Patience asked that others give consideration to the position of Chairman.

Patience brought a brochure for the Historic Preservation Conference to be held on Friday, September 28. She suggested that anyone who can should go, there are some very good workshops being offered. Brenda and Jodie may try to attend.

Bob made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jodie seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda L. Putney". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Brenda L. Putney  
Secretary