

# TOWN OF PROVINCETOWN

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### WORK SESSION MINUTES OF April 22, 2015 3:30pm

#### MEETING HELD IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

**Members Present:** Martin Risteen, Lisa Pacheco Robb, Mark Westman, Marcene Marcoux, Laurie Delmolino, David McGlothlin and Thomas Biggert

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Leif D. Hamnquist, Permit Coordinator and Gloria McPherson, Town Planner

**Work Session called to order by Mr. Thomas Biggert at 3:48pm**

Polly Burnell and John Dowd, both former long term members of the Historic District Commission, were in attendance to explain their methodology when making decisions and about how to apply the guidelines set forth in the General Bylaws consistently.

Polly Burnell began the conversation by explaining her own personal methodology when dealing with a case. She also gave examples of different building styles and gave a brief history about why buildings are so different from neighborhood to neighborhood and block to block. She explained the structures were formed around the function they served and by the class of person who occupied them and insisted that site visits are the most important part of the process when making a decision. She also gave her passionate opinion about the preservation of the towns small structures and lamented the fact that they were disappearing.

John Dowd talked about his experience as chair of the HDC and gave guidance about making defensible decisions and urged the current members to fall back on the guidelines when in doubt.

The commission had a discussion about submittal material and expressed the desire to have better photographs included in the packets. Some members explained that photographs could be manipulated and not provide an accurate representation of a structure and again the need to make site visits was greatly encouraged. Lisa Pacheco Robb wanted more precedent examples from buildings in the neighborhood included into the packets. Thom Biggert didn't want applicants to reinvent the wheel but to use precedents to get inspiration and think creatively about their project.

The commission discussed solar panels and how to properly approve or deny installations and how to work with applicants and the public in general to get the best possible installations. There was talk about the politics of their work and David McGlothlin noted that the Board of Selectmen have a policy on solar panels but have yet to have a public discussion with the commission and wondered if a meeting between the two boards was needed to discuss the issue of solar installations. Certain properties that wanted solar panels were discussed and the ramifications of denying an applicant an installation based on certain attributes of the structure/property were hypothesized.

The commission moved back to examine specific styles of construction and building design found in Provincetown and the function those structures served and how that function shaped their design. Lisa Pacheco Robb stressed the importance of making a site visit, not only to see the structure and the site but to get context on the surrounding buildings and neighborhood.

The commission talked over about postponing cases and agreed a case should not be postponed more than once if possible, twice at the most, and when they send applicants away the first time the applicant should leave the meeting knowing exactly what the commission felt didn't work with their designs and what they need to do to change the design. Martin Risteen wanted the commission to try to get to 'yes'.

The group reviewed different cases and weighed the pros and cons of the decisions that came from those cases.

Lisa Pacheco Robb explained that buildings were created through an additive process and felt that was a special way to view history.

Thom Biggert emphasized the need to keep an organic feeling about town and designs should look as if they have always been there.

A general discussion about the demolition of buildings and the demolition delay bylaw occurred.

John Dowd and Polly Burnell gave their opinion about working with applicants and the best practices to have fair and meaningful proceedings at the meetings. They also discussed the best and worst cases that were done while they were members.

The commission conversed about the preservations of doors and windows and would like to see more preservation of existing architectural elements instead of replacements. John Dowd encouraged the commission to be careful when dealing with door and windows replacements. Polly Burnell exclaimed that preservation is the most green and cited examples.

John Dowd ended the conversation by explaining that the commission should not have opinions and that they should agree with designs because they are authentic and appropriate.

***At 5:35, a motion to adjourn was made by Thomas Biggert and seconded by Lisa Delmolino. Motion passed unanimously. 5-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Biggert  
Chair