

**Bolton Historical Commission
Minutes of Public Hearing
June 1, 2022**

Attendees

Co-Chairs: Martha Remington, Robert Busch

Members Present: Alice Coggeshall, Robert Tattersall, and Nate Smith

Members Absent: Jeannemarie Padovano

Public Participants: Anne Forbes, Mary Ciummo, Brad Reed, Betsy-Taylor Kennedy, Sandra King, Tim Fiehler, Thomas Falwell, Pat Bensetler, anonymous

Zoom hearing was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Chairman Busch opened the meeting noting that this is a duly noticed public hearing on demolition permit XP-22-4 to determine if the house/barn at 22 West Berlin Road is preferably preserved.

He explained that the Commission will first decide whether to vote on a final decision at this hearing or delay the decision for up to a week as provided in the bylaw. Should the Commission elect to go ahead with the decision at this hearing, it would:

- Determine if the building is to be preferably preserved.
- If it is determined to be preserved, the Commission will vote on whether or not to impose a 6 month delay under the bylaw.

Attorney and Permit Applicant Thomas Falwell, representing the Taylors (property owners) explained the reasoning behind the request for demolition. He noted that the property has been on the market for an extended period with little interest. The interest they have received is primarily in the land, rather than structures. He believes the house and barn have outlived their usefulness and no potential buyers have shown interest in updating them to today's standards.

Mary Ciummo provided the first public comment and asked about the other structures on the property and expressed her disappointment with the lack of respect for Bolton History. She also speculated that a developer may be the buyer.

Attorney Falwell stated that he had no knowledge of a development plan.

Tim Fiehler provided the next public comment and echoed the statements made by Mary Ciummo. He also noted that the house and barn are in great shape relative to their age and asked that they reconsider plans to tear them down.

Chairman Busch asked Attorney Falwell if there was a plan to use the property after the sale, noting that typically when demolition permits are requested the reason and future plans of the property are more explicitly provided.

Attorney Falwell stated that while that may sometimes be the case, he has no knowledge of the future plans, representing only the Seller, not the Buyer.

Brad Reed provided the next public comment, asking to confirm that the filing is on behalf of the owner/seller. Also commenting that the structures represent Bolton's past and should not be demolished.

Sandra King provided the next public comment noting that it is her understanding that the property is already under agreement and asking Attorney Falwell to clarify if the demolition permit is a contingency of the sale. She further recommended that the Historical Commission seek out additional clarifying information so that a decision can be made with all of the facts.

Mary Ciummo agreed that more information was needed to justify a demolition permit and asked again if the permit was a condition of the sale.

Attorney Falwell stated that he cannot disclose the closing date or any other details of a potential sale as it is not his place as the attorney for the Seller to provide that information.

Sandra King inquired if Attorney Falwell knows the information in question.

Attorney Falwell declined to answer.

Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, of a neighboring property, provided the next public comment and noted that historic properties are hard to find the right buyer for but that that does not mean they should be demolished and suggested that the sellers be more patient and find someone else to buy the property who is interested in maintaining the structures. She also noted that a large Beech tree is present at the front of the property and noted that it should be preserved as well.

Anne Forbes provided the next public comment and explained that the structures in question are historically significant to the Town's History and in good enough condition that demolition is not appropriate.

Chairwoman Remington commented for the Commission and supported the previous comments, noting that the condition of the structures is excellent given their age.

Pat Bensetler provided the next public comment and concurred with the previous comments that demolition of these structures did not seem appropriate.

Tim Fiehler reiterated previous comments and noted his support for a demolition delay.

Chairman Busch determined that there were no further public comments and called for two votes:

1. The first vote was whether the house and barn should be *preferably preserved* as defined in the related bylaw. **The vote was unanimous in favor.**
2. The second vote was whether to *enact a six month demolition delay* as defined in the related bylaw. **The vote was unanimous in favor.**

Chairman Busch asked that Attorney Falwell provide his contact information and reach out to Mr. Busch in order to negotiate a preservation plan.

The hearing was adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Nate Smith