

Minutes

SACRED HEART REUSE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

The Sacred Heart Reuse Committee held its second meeting on March 19, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the Community Center. Members present were: Stephen Carter, John Davis, Rita Fontes, Ed Keenan, Alan Wachman and Irene McCarthy.

The Committee approved the March 5, 2008 meeting Minutes.

David Martin and Shirley Schofield of the Sharon Historical Commission provided the Committee with some background information concerning the Sacred Heart property. The site, they explained, was previously operated by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart as a residential school for "troubled" boys. The imposing four and one-half story structure depicted in several postcards shared with the Committee was occupied as a dormitory facing East Foxboro Street. The Brothers also sponsored a summer camp that included, among other activities, swimming in the nearby pond. A murder/robbery was committed on the site sometime in the 1960's. And the Brothers jealously guarded an apple orchard on the premises. The Sacred Heart School closed sometime in the 1970's.

The sole remaining structure on the site is less than 100 years old and, therefore, not of historical "significance" to the Historical Commission. The Historical Commission must be consulted, and give approval to, any official naming of the site.

David DePree (Wilbur School Committee) shared some of his insights and experiences with the Committee. At the outset, it may be productive, he said, to develop criteria important to the Committee (e.g., open space, revenue, traffic, mixed use, etc.), then rank those factors in terms of relative significance. He recommended we solicit input from neighbors and abutters (perhaps by inviting them to a public forum), as well as from Town departments and boards. We should determine what can be done at the site as a matter of right, and what will require a permit or other approval. He recommended we examine various Wilbur School Committee documents posted on the Town of Sharon website. He explained that his Committee had a budget to hire experts, such as an architect and civil engineer, who helped his Committee to frame RFPs. The Committee then tested the proposals submitted against the criteria previously identified as important.

Mr. DePree mentioned an individual from Norwood/Westwood who might be interested in developing a recreational facility on the site in partnership with the Town. The Committee expressed a preference for learning more about the site and conducting its due diligence before soliciting input from private parties.

The Committee will conduct a site visit in the near future. The Committee will invite Greg Meister (Conservation Agent) and Ben Puritz or a member of the Board of Selectmen to its next meeting. The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:05 PM.