

The Board of Selectmen held a public hearing on September 8, 2008 to hear public comment regarding the proposed ordinance establishing Raymond-Ambler Farm as Historic Property No. 7.

PRESENT: First Selectman Brennan, Second Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Harold Clark, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Ted Hoffstatter

ALSO PRESENT: Carol Russell, Harriet S. Taylor, Tierney O’Hearn, Janet Foster, Jonathan Foltz, Jerry Dawson, Ann Bell, Marian Wulffleff, Kevin Quinlan, Bruce Hampson, Jan Andras

First Selectman William Brennan opened the hearing at 7:00 pm. He stated that this hearing is designed to let citizens speak about the proposed ordinance or proposed change. An ordinance must be created to make this property an historic property to preserve the historic aspects. He then opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Carol Russell, Chairman, Wilton Historic Properties & Historic District Commission, stated that this came about because they were approached by then officers of the “Friends of Ambler Farm” to have the historic district title on the Ambler Farm property and help with applying for grant money. The commission came forward to the Planning & Zoning Commission, who was favorable, and then to the owner (the town). Before the final vote on the ordinance, there were some questions and concerns.

First Selectman Brennan raised some questions that need to be discussed. In reviewing the executor’s deed, he came up with questions about the “yellow house” in parcel B, (Note: There are three parcels to Ambler Farm) which the town has the right to sell or demolish buildings. We are creating an historic property. If we go to this historic designation, are we encumbering this property? We could sell it, but if we wanted to demolish or make renovations, would this encumber us? An example might be the white house, with historic designation, would we have encumbrance against ourselves that for renovations would require going through the historic district?

Ms. Russell does not think there are “restrictions”. Nowhere does it say that you cannot demolish, change or add to a property. You come before the board. Mr. Brennan asked why should the town put itself in the position where it has to go to a “town created” commission for permission?”

Mr. Jonathan Foltz, a member of the Commission stated that the actual rules are not that something be replaced with something exactly the same. It just has to be historically appropriate to the site.

Mr. Brennan would like to propose that we send the basic questions regarding this issue to town counsel for his response. He will also write the Historic Commission to ask the Trustees of Ambler Farm to comment. Then we will have a broader base of thought when we vote on this matter.

Hearing no further comment, the hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Jan Andras
Recording Secretary