

6/4/07 - PRE-MEETING SITE VISIT

**Don Johnson**

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**From:** Dore' Hunter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2007 12:41 PM  
**To:** Community Preservation Committee; Finance Committee; Historic District Commission; Historical Commission; Municipal Properties Department  
**Cc:** Manager Department; Board of Selectmen  
**Subject:** Intended process concerning 17 Woodbury Lane house

Hi Folks,

It is planned to have the members of the Board of Selectmen walk through and around the building located at 17 Woodbury Lane (sometimes known as the Valencourt house) at about 6:30 pm, prior to the Board's viewing of proposed new voting machines and the commencement of the Boards regular meeting, on Monday, 4 June.

This is intended to be the first step in a process which will hopefully ultimately result in a decision as to what the Town should do about that derelict and unoccupied structure.

Inasmuch as your Department or Committee presumably has an interest in the use/condition of the house which still has historic sections, and which is just inside the boundary of the Center Historic District, you are invited to participate in this scheduled walk through. Or if more convenient, you might arrange with Dean Charter to inspect the building at some other time in the near future. This so all concerned will be prepared, as desired, to participate in an appropriate process leading to a decision as to the future of this structure.

A little background: I believe it has been about ten years since the Town purchased that property and demolished some of the non-historic portions of the structure in order to enlarge the Town Hall/Acton Memorial Library parking area. Since then there has been some limited storage of articles in the building and the temporary engineer hired to oversee the sewer project had a desk and work space in one room. Little or nothing of consequence has been done to repair or maintain the remaining structure, which is now in a bad state. The configuration of the remaining structure does not lend itself to ADA compliance. I am advised that the Town some time ago obtained an estimate that the cost necessary to put the house back into appropriate condition would be about \$700,000. To my knowledge no useful Town purpose for the structure, even if renovated, has been identified so no significant Town funds have been directed toward upkeep. It is understood that neighbors are concerned about the derelict appearance of the structure. I have been told that the house facade facing Woodbury Lane has some historic significance or appearance. I am given to understand that, at one point, the HDC had agreed that the house might be moved to some other site in a Historic District, but understandably the HDC does not want the house demolished. Under the current zoning the Town Hall/Acton Memorial Library parking area could be further expanded if all, or perhaps even part, of the remaining structure was not present.

Your views on this situation, and suggestions, are solicited by the Board

Regards,  
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