

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Michael Weishan <[michael@michaelweishan.com](mailto:michael@michaelweishan.com)>

**Subject:** 28 Boston Road

**Date:** October 20, 2016 at 11:44:39 AM EDT

**To:** [DeaconPaul@stannesouthborough.org](mailto:DeaconPaul@stannesouthborough.org)

Dear Deacon Paul,

Thank you so much for taking my call yesterday. Unfortunately I was driving when we spoke and unable to take notes, so I would like to just summarize what I understood from you yesterday to make sure this is your recollection as well:

From your account, Mr. Poitre approached St. Annes immediately after purchasing the property in May or June, and inquired whether the church was willing to sell a sliver of land that would allow for the separation of the existing structure onto a new 25,000 square foot lot. He informed you that he was planning a development on the land, which was going to happen regardless. Either he would demolish the house and build his development, or, if the Archdiocese of Worcester were willing to sell him a sliver of land, he could preserve the structure on the new lot and still do the development behind. As this seemed a reasonable proposition, and mindful of conserving the existing historical structure, this offer was forwarded on to the bishop, approved, and the 94 sq. feet of land was subsequently sold to Mr. Poitre.

My call to you yesterday was the first time you had heard of the potential demolition of the historic house at 28 Boston Road, and that the Church's motivation in selling the land was to accommodate both the new development as well as the existing structure.

If this seems correct, please simply reply to this email; otherwise feel free to amend or correct my recollection.

Thanks again.

***Michael Weishan***

***Principal: Michael Weishan & Associates***

***PBS/ NPR Host, Author & Historian***

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On Tue, Oct 25, 2016 at 3:09 PM, Michael Weishan <[michael@michaelweishan.com](mailto:michael@michaelweishan.com)> wrote:  
Dear Deacon Paul,

Did you receive my previous email outlining our telephone conversation of 10/20? If you are uncomfortable with signing off on this electronically, perhaps you or your representative could attend our next meeting? We are particularly interested in what representations were made to you by Mr. Poutre regarding the preservation of the current structure.

Cheers, Michael

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**Michael Weishan**  
**Principal: Michael Weishan & Associates**  
**PBS/ NPR Host, Author & Historian**

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On Mon, Nov 7, 2016 at 11:18 AM, Michael Weishan <[michael@michaelweishan.com](mailto:michael@michaelweishan.com)> wrote:  
Hello Deacon Paul,

We haven't heard back from you or your committee, and 28 Boston Road is on our agenda for this evening – 7PM at the Historical Museum. It would be great to have a clearer picture of what representations were made to whom about preserving the structure. Could you either validate my recollections or send revised so I may read that into the record this evening? Alternatively, you or a member of your committee would be most welcome in person!

Thanks,

Michael

**From:** Paul Reuter <[deaconpaul@stannesouthborough.org](mailto:deaconpaul@stannesouthborough.org)>  
**Subject: Re: 28 Boston Road**  
**Date:** November 7, 2016 at 12:15:56 PM EST  
**To:** Michael Weishan <[michael@michaelweishan.com](mailto:michael@michaelweishan.com)>

Hi Michael,

I was just getting ready to forward you an email. This is from Tom Bhisitkul who was on the committee that was formed when Bill approached us about purchasing the land. As he understands the legal issues surrounding real estate purchase much better than I do, I think his response below best reflects the stance of the parish. Sorry to be so late with this response, I had to give time for all members involved in this to weigh in on the issue.

Thanks,

Paul

Mr. Weishan—good evening. By way of brief introduction, I am a parishioner at St. Anne Church and a member of the Parish Finance Committee, and in that capacity work closely with Deacon Paul and Fr. Albert on various parish matters. Deacon Paul forwarded your email (below) to me and other members of the Finance Committee, which I understand followed a telephone conversation with you earlier this week regarding the same subject.

Deacon Paul was happy to chat with you informally regarding the Parish's dealings with Mr. Poutre. However, as he mentioned to you during the conversation, he has reservations about providing you with an "official" position regarding the matters currently before the Historical Commission. Deacon Paul has conferred with me and other members of the Church Finance Committee on this subject, and we share his reluctance to have the Parish take any official position on those matters. We also have serious reservations about having details of our private dealings and communications with Mr. Poutre made part of the public record. We hope that you can understand these concerns and will respect the Church's posture in this regard.

I do feel the need to address an undercurrent in your email below, which seems to suggest (as, perhaps, your interpretation Deacon Paul's account), that Mr. Poutre may have acted in a dishonest manner with respect to the property at 28 Boston Road. That would be an unfortunate, and inaccurate, inference. Mr. Poutre and his family are longstanding and valued parishioners of St. Anne, who (like all parishioners) have a personal interest in the well-being of their church and have personal friendships and relationships with many others in the St. Anne faith community. In his dealings with the Church regarding the 28 Boston Road property, he has been extraordinarily fair and respectful, and has been forthright about his intentions. We would be very disappointed if any representation was made to the Historical Commission (or otherwise) that Mr. Poutre has acted in an unfair or deceptive manner with respect to the Church.

Again, I hope and trust that you will respect the Church's wishes and position on this subject, and in particular its desire not to become involved in the pending matters before the Commission. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please direct your communications to me. Thanks very much for your understanding and cooperation in this regard.

--Tom Bhisitkul

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Michael Weishan <[michael@michaelweishan.com](mailto:michael@michaelweishan.com)>  
**Subject: Re: 28 Boston Road**  
**Date:** November 7, 2016 at 1:52:34 PM EST  
**To:** Paul Reuter <[deaconpaul@stannesouthborough.org](mailto:deaconpaul@stannesouthborough.org)>  
**Cc:** historical <[historical@southboroughma.com](mailto:historical@southboroughma.com)>, Joseph Hubley <[joehubley@verizon.net](mailto:joehubley@verizon.net)>, Maria Romero Vagnini <[maria.vagnini01@gmail.com](mailto:maria.vagnini01@gmail.com)>, Rebecca Deans-Rowe <[rdeansrowe@gmail.com](mailto:rdeansrowe@gmail.com)>, Kate Mattison <[kate.mattison@live.com](mailto:kate.mattison@live.com)>, Amanda Martinot <[amandamartinot@gmail.com](mailto:amandamartinot@gmail.com)>, Mark Robidoux <[mrobidoux@southboroughma.com](mailto:mrobidoux@southboroughma.com)>

Dear Tom and Deacon Paul,

I am extremely disappointed to hear that you and the Parish Finance Committee have reservations about clarifying the sale of church land to Mr. Poutre, for as I mentioned to Deacon Paul, the optics of this appear *very* poor. Though only a tiny sliver of frontage, this transfer directly affects the historic fabric of Southborough and should have been made entirely transparent, especially as to a reasonable person this could easily appear to be an insider using inside information to thwart the zoning laws of Southborough. Is Saint Anne's in the habit of selling bits of itself for the benefit of its parishioners? And if so, who determines who receives this largesse? You are aware, are you not, that had you not sold the frontage to Mr. Poutre, and had he been unable to demonstrate that there was no other buyer for the property, there would have been no development, period, and the historic home and its original acreage would have remained intact? In my opinion, and I am speaking for myself personally as a member of the Commission, St. Anne's agreement to sell this parcel of land very much damages the historic nature of the neighborhood and is detrimental to the Town.

As for the credibility and intentions of Mr. Poutre, you should be aware that he directly lied to us not once but three times in his public presentation before the Commission, claiming that he had no plans for the property and was interested solely in the "future expansion needs of the St. Annes" — only to present an ANR to the planning board for development of the parcel less than a week later. Our chairman and I happened by chance to be at that meeting, and were shocked - to say the least - to see such a blatant example of misrepresentation. According to what Deacon Paul told me on the phone, one of the reasons for St. Annes selling the frontage to Mr. Poutre was in fact the parish's desire to preserve the historic building at 28 Boston Road. To my way of thinking, this brings St. Annes and your committee very much into the public record, for if Mr. Poutre did in fact make those representations to you, then he should be expected to abide by them. One of the basic tenets of our Demolition Delay By-Law is that the owner of an historic property seeking demolition make *"continuing, bona fide and reasonable efforts to locate a purchaser to preserve, rehabilitate or restore the subject building."*

"Bona fide" has certainly not been the case to date, and your unwillingness to clarify matters makes our task even harder.

I will be reading this email exchange in its entirety into the public record. There may or may not be members of the press present.

Michael Weishan  
Member, Southborough Historical Commission