

Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for July 31, 2019, 7 PM

Approved at the 8/28/19 meeting

**Shutesbury Town Hall locked so meeting location moved to outside
Spear Memorial Library across the road.**

Members Present: Karen Czerwonka, Christopher Donta, Craig Pepin, Janice Stone. Mary Lou Conca (Associate) also present.

Members Absent: Henry Geddes, Kristin Van Patten.

Old Business

Update on CPC Old Town Hall project. No recent news. Not sure if anything will happen now with Bob Groves removing himself from the project.

Quabbin Park Memorial Day Summary – Janice has asked DCR for photos of Shutesbury Historical Commission attendance at past Memorial Days for our records. Janice and Karen attended this year, along with Karen’s husband Bill Czerwonka who marched with the banner as well. Karen and Bill dressed in historical garb.

Gravestone Restoration CPC Project. Janice is a new member of the Cemetery Commission. Commission has had one meeting since her appointment July 1 which she could not attend. She will get news of the Gravestone Restoration CPC project for the next meeting.

New business

Response to invitation to comment, Locks Pond Rd Wireless facility.

Janice has determined that in her limited search, there’s no record of historical interest on the site. It is just north of “Summit Rock”, which is said to be the highest point in town. For Native American culturally significant sites, the tribes are notified separately and they respond in those cases. Janice will respond by the deadline for Historical Commission comments. Chris has some other records which he will also check. If he turns up anything significant the HC will convene an emergency meeting if necessary. If not, Janice will respond that we found nothing in our records.

Welcome to Craig Pepin, newly appointed member. Thanks for taking draft minutes.

Appointment of new Chair. No one ready to step up at this time. Janice will act as “floating” Chair for the time being. She is also currently serving as Secretary.

Filling the empty position on the Commission.

Commissioners discussed the status of the vacant seat on the Commission after the resignation of Miriam DeFant (6/5/19) for family reasons. Mary Lou, who had applied previously for the position, stated that she was still interested in being appointed to the Historical Commission. Considering her long-time interest and regular attendance at the Historical Commission meetings, the Commission voted to recommend to the Selectboard to appoint Mary Lou Conca to fill the vacant seat on the Commission.

Janice made the Motion, seconded by Karen. Motion passed 4-0. Janice will email the Selectboard with the information.

Approval of minutes. Postponed until the April minutes are formally prepared.

Program related to Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Landscape. Janice has contacted Emily Volz, waiting to hear back from her. Hopes to do something this Fall.

Other possible projects:

Commissioners discussed projects that they would like to work on for the Historical Commission. This included digitization of records. First task would be to catalog existing records. Leslie Bracebridge should be contacted as the person with the most expertise on the existing physical records. Perhaps a good first step would be to select a relatively small group of historically significant records to catalogue.

Another possible project would be to create a database and map of all the gravesites and gravestones in the town cemeteries, and make it available to genealogists. Janice mentioned the example of Hatfield MA and the information they have available on their website. There is a paper map of the plots for the back section of West Cemetery, but not the older front section. The "Corbin Collection" (book with information on older gravestones) lists some, but not all of the gravesites in Shutesbury. There would be a lot of work involved, but Janice and others are interested in getting started. Perhaps the Corbin Collection could be digitized and put on line as well. Massachusetts Historical Commission lists most of the known cemeteries in the state and we could check to see if there are any known family plots that are not otherwise known. Commissioners also discussed "Find a Grave" as a good resource.

Janice offered to lead a walk to the "Monk's cave" for Commissioners who have not been to one of these in town. The correct terminology is "underground stone chamber". This one is easily visible from the road. Interested Commissioners agreed to meet at the Town Hall on Saturday August 31st at 10 AM.

Unanticipated business

Mary Lou Conca's Doors project. Mary Lou has offered to have three of her photos of historical doors in Shutesbury published in the Town newsletter, but the newsletter editor has asked for the endorsement of the Historical Commission. Janice made the motion that the Historical Commission endorse the publication of the photos of 3 historical doors in the town newsletter. Craig seconded, and Motion passed 4-0. She would like to develop a poster for sale with all proceeds to be given to the Senior Center.

Adjournment. Janice made the motion, seconded by Craig, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM. *Next meeting Wednesday August 28th 7 PM.*

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary (with great notes from Craig Pepin)
Shutesbury Historical Commission