

Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for July 20, 2020, 2:00 PM

Approved at September 10, 2020 meeting

Zoom Remote Access Meeting

Members Present: Mary Lou Conca, Karen Czerwonka, Chris Donta, Henry Geddes, Craig Pepin, Janice Stone.

Members absent: NA

Visitors: Greg Caulton, John Walter, John Warwick, Donald Wakoluk.

Town Clerk Grace Bannash hosted the meeting and later turned it over to J. Stone.

Old Business

Update on Gravestone Restoration project. Janice told the group a contract has been awarded to Historic Gravestone Services. Work should begin in a few weeks.

Quabbin Park Memorial Day 2020. Janice told the group that this year they made a video of the parade and ceremonies taken from previous years, and included new videotaped speeches. The video is available on YouTube.

Approval of Minutes February 10 & March 9, 2020. Commission discussed some aspects of the Cell Tower review mentioned in the February minutes, understanding that the Commission had no known historical/cultural information to share about it. Craig made the motion to approve these minutes, seconded by Karen. All voted in favor. March 9 minutes were reviewed by the Commission, with some questions and discussion about how to make contact with Tribal Representatives. Karen made the motion, seconded by Henry, to approve the minutes as written. Henry and Mary Lou abstained since they had not been at the meeting, the rest voted in favor.

Old & New Business

Meeting potential candidates for Historical Commission. Greg Caulton, John Warwick and John Walter were present as people interested in serving on the Historical Commission. They each gave some background on themselves & their reasons for interest in the Historical Commission. Greg and John Warwick have computer skills that would be helpful for the Commission. John Walter is interested in cataloguing historic houses. Michael Shershow has notified Janice that things have come up at work and he is no longer a candidate for the Commission position. Commission then discussed open seats. Besides the seat that is available now, Janice told the Commission she was moving out of town, so her seat will be available as well. She asked the Commission if they would consider allowing her to stay on the Commission until December, so she could try to see the SHRAB grant (gravestone restoration and painting of war memorial) completed. Commission agreed, and discussed whether Janice should move down to an Associate position so two new people could get on the Commission now, and a third could be an Associate for now. Janice will check with Town Administrator about whether she could still monitor the grant if she was just an Associate Commissioner. Commission will wait to find out more about Associate positions, and hopefully vote people in at next meeting. Commission discussed process, which seems to be candidates send a letter of interest to the Selectboard, and the Historical Commission makes recommendations to the Selectboard, which makes the

decisions about who to appoint. John Walter told the Commission he had submitted a letter of interest some time ago, but would do so again now. Other two will as well.

Potential Cultural Council-Historical project. Janice described some communication she has had (Historical Commission email) with Ayesha Lateef, widow of the famous musician Yusef Lateef. She is interested in putting an historical marker on her property commemorating her husband's contributions. Janice told her to get in touch with the Shutesbury Cultural Council, and perhaps there could be a concert or some kind of celebration of his work as a public cultural event for the installation of the marker. Apparently, the Historical Commission is responsible for plaques on houses with the names of prior residents, so this may fall under our purview. She suggested this might be a nice project to help support.

Locating Reference materials on CSLs. To be continued.

Possible purchase of some books for library. Janice had sent around a list of books she thought might be interesting and useful. Mary Lou had lent Janice a folder of material, which Janice has copied but has not had time to scan to send to people yet. Both lists include "Stone Prayers: Native American Constructions of the Eastern Seaboard" by Curtiss Hoffman.

Four new possible development projects & impact on any CSLs. Janice gave a brief description about the four ANRADs (Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineations) submitted a couple months ago to the Conservation Commission for wetland boundaries confirmation on four large areas in town. These areas are off Carver Rd, Baker Rd and two off Pratt Corner Rd. The review, which involves hundreds of acres, is just for wetland boundaries for now, preliminary to possible solar project development. The public hearings are being paused until the general public can meet in person to discuss the projects again. In the meantime, Cowls has submitted four Preliminary Subdivision Plans for portions or all of these same properties. Janice attended the Zoom Planning Board meeting the other night, where the Planning Board determined that the submissions did not meet the necessary definition of what a preliminary subdivision plan is for, and did not have all the required materials submitted. They will be rejected, which means any new solar development projects on these properties would fall under the revised solar bylaw approved at the Annual Town Meeting in June. Janice's concern is that there may be stone structures (Colonial and Native American) which could be destroyed by a large solar (or residential) development. How can the Commission and Planning Board find out what is out there in time for it to matter in the decision-making review of development plans?

Discussion about Scenic Roads bylaw & other ways to protect stone landscapes. Commission discussed the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Rolf Cachet-Schilling submitted a few years ago, as a starting point for another try. It was just for public lands and willing private owners. Mary Lou told the group Rolf had taken her and Henry on a tour of some stone groupings or "stone prayers" a few years ago. There are definitely such features in Shutesbury. Don (Town tree warden) mentioned his concern for large diameter trees along the roadways which are being cut down. There does not seem to be any way to protect these old trees near historical areas. The Scenic Roads bylaw would help, for trees and stone walls within 25' of the centerline of the roads. How to research the age and possible historical importance of these

trees? Could we create a registry of historic trees? Amherst has/had a book on important trees in town. Don will check with the Amherst tree warden on how they protect important trees, and how they decided on which trees to put into their book of important trees.

Consider preparing applications for National Register of Historic Places for Guideboard and 1829 Town Hall. To be continued.

Field trip? Janice would like to do another little field trip for the Commission, but is not sure if it is appropriate for her to show other people stone structures. Mary Lou said she thought it would be a good idea and helpful for the Historical Commission to see some of these sites.

Unanticipated business at the time of posting, as time permits. Craig told the group he and his two sons had met with Leslie Bracebridge at the 1829 Town Hall to look at the kinds of records that are kept there, and to discuss a project they could work on that would help the Historical Commission. Something has come up so he has not been able to pursue that, but he has started transferring the old taped audio interviews Leslie had brought to a previous meeting into digital format. Some are 42-year old audio cassettes, which are okay for the listening, but not good enough audio to use to make digital transcripts from the voices. John Walter said he would like some resolution on the appointments to the Commission at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Dates. Commission agreed on Monday August 24 at 2 PM by Zoom.

Adjournment. Craig made the motion, seconded by Karen, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary
Shutesbury Historical Commission