

Shutesbury Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for February 24, 2021, 6 PM

Approved at the 3/24/21 meeting
Zoom Remote Access Meeting

Members Present: Greg Caulton (GC), Mary Lou Conca (MC), Karen Czerwonka (KC), Miriam DeFant (MD) (Secretary), Henry Geddes (HG)(Chair), Janice Stone (JS) (temporary Secretary).
Guests: Ezzell Floranina (EF) 7PM.

Henry Geddes hosted the meeting. This meeting is still being recorded, audio & visual.

HG read the agenda items out loud, and then proceeded with meeting.

Approve minutes of 1/16/21 and 1/27/21. MD completed the minutes for 1/6/21, JS did the minutes for 1/27/21. MC has some comments & suggested changes for both. For the **1/6/21 minutes**, MC expressed concern about the description of her reaction to MD's comments in the first paragraph on the second page. She also thought the third paragraph on that page did not correctly describe the discussion in a few ways, especially concerning emails. MD asked the Commission to table the discussion on these minutes for now, until she has had a chance to review MC's comments and look over her own notes. MC made the motion, seconded by MD, to postpone until later the approval of these minutes. Voting: HG yes, KC yes, GC yes, JS yes, MC yes, MD yes. Motion passes unanimously. **Minutes for 1/27/21.** MC had some comments on these as well. She has already sent them to JS, who agrees to the changes. They include removal of a sentence ("She has not done them yet") on page 2 under "Review of language for Town newsletter", and the last phrase ("and done more for the Commission") from the top of page 3. MC made the motion to approve these minutes, with those revisions as discussed. MD seconded. Voting: HG yes, GC yes, MC yes, KC yes, MD yes, JS yes). Motion passes unanimously.

Update on Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Landscape projects and contracting. MD told the Commission the Planning Board has not received the new solar projects for review yet. She mentioned that this coming Monday (March 1) there will be a presentation to the Selectboard by AMP solar at 5:30pm about their contract proposal. MD is hoping the review of the draft "Primer" will be done before Friday morning, when she has her shoulder surgery and won't be able to type for several weeks. Commission discussed how to distribute and circulate the large MB document. We can put on the Historical Commission website and send a digital copy to various Boards (Planning, Select, probably Conservation), and let the public know where to find it. Commission discussed printing out copies to send to Planning Board members. Main document is about 20 pages, with 50 pages of appendices. GC offered to help with layout, to make it more readable and inserting the photos. Commission thought that was great. MD will send draft to GC after some last revisions she is working on. HG, JS and Lisa McLoughlin (LM) are reviewing it. LM has helped a lot, especially with the references, editing and language.

MD told the Commission about the preliminary (zoom) meeting with Bettina Washington, Wapanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Tribal Historic Preservation Office, about whether they are interested in consulting with us. HG is waiting to hear from her about contracting details. She has also had some outreach to the Nipmuc Nation, and is waiting for a letter from them about their interest in working with us.

Commission discussed the draft report, with some questions about terms and other information. MD thought it was good to include some photos of stone structures found in Shutesbury, but not actually from the proposed solar sites. We are not calling them “Ceremonial Stone Landscapes” (CSLs), since that is not up to us to decide. These photos were taken in Shutesbury several years ago by Sarah Kohler, who agreed to let the Historical Commission use them for this report. MC said if this report was being issued by the Historical Commission, she would like to see it before it is issued. MD said yes, of course. She will be done with the draft before her surgery Friday AM and will send it to the Commission for review. It is not to be made public yet, still needs some final formatting. HG stated that things were moving along, and the report looked good, made a compelling case. Commission discussed the different audiences and goals. The purpose is to educate the public and town boards about CSLs. There is a lot of history in it. She is hoping some parts may be put on the town website and circulated in the schools. She just learned some more about the early deeds signed for town land.

Another piece will be why we want the Tribes to consult with us, to help identify and protect the historical cultural stone structures. We need to list the recommendations for the Planning Board, and lay the groundwork for the way the Historical Commission can play a role in the review. These are just recommendations, not orders. This Planning Board recommendations piece can't be completed until the solar projects are submitted and we have all had a chance to review them. This draft report will be ready soon, except for the information we need from the specific solar plans.

MD asked HG how the contacting was going with the Wampanoag Tribe. HG said there had been some setbacks, but doing better now. They have not gotten back to him with final contract yet. MD suggested sending them the signed contract, for them to sign or ask for revisions, to get things moving. MD has sent out a copy of the signed contract to Lisa McLoughlin.

Fundraising.

MD discussed the idea of a fundraising campaign for the Historical Commission. We are starting to spend the Historical Commission savings, and want to be able to replenish it. The previous Commission did regular fundraising, mostly selling note cards and similar items. She believes some people in town and the area would be willing to donate to help fund our current projects. People would send checks to the Historical Commission, to go into a donation account. MD explained the Historical Commission accounts and budget. The Commission gets about \$350/year from the town for normal expenses, such as printing copies of reports. There is also a “donation account”, which includes the fundraising the former Commission did. It also includes the funding we get each year from a special source, for participating in the Memorial Day event at Quabbin Park (Karen Czerwonka, her husband Bill and JS have been participating the last several years). JS said she would check with the accountant to see if there were any stipulations on how the memorial funds could be spent. Commissioners discussed how to ask for funds. Create a flyer or handout? We are not having public events when we could hand these out. How to circulate the flyer and appeal? Somehow online. Maybe a non-profit would be willing to help us? Perhaps people who want to could drop off donations in the drop box outside town hall. Commissioners discussed cost of doing a mailing. May have to settle for word of mouth and our website. Fundraising not just for CSL work, but also for the signs MC is working on. Commission setting up a special subcommittee on fundraising, made up of GC, MD and Ezzell Floranina (soon to be new Historical Commission member).

SHRAB Roving Archivist Program Application. MD went over a preliminary application for this special program. As discussed earlier, this could help us evaluate the materials in the Historical Commission records office and file cabinets. She needs a letter of support from the Chair. HG will sign one. MD has written up a description of our records and our interest in getting a strategic assessment of the collection. This would be a first step in prioritizing which records to start digitizing for our website. JS mentioned that the Gravestone Restoration project was part of a small SHRAB grant she got last year. MD made the motion, seconded by JS, to approve applying to this grant program. Voting: HG yes, GC yes, MC yes, MD yes, JS yes, KC yes. Motion passes unanimously.

CPC representative. Since J. Walter has left, we need a replacement on the Community Preservation Committee. They met last night, to vote on recommending projects to Annual Town Meeting this year. KC said she would be willing to attempt it, if they can manage to get the info to her without a computer or cellphone option. HG will communicate with the Chair Alan Hanson to find out if they would be able to accommodate KC's situation. EF may be interested if KC can't.

Update on historic signs project.

MC told the Commission she recently received some new information from the Athol Historical Commission, about their signs. Their signs were done back in 1975, and it was organized by an Historical Commission member who had a lot of contacts to help. They have a map of an "historic trail". The sign has a lot of information on it, not a drive-by reading. MC is proposing six signs, designating the 6 historic districts described in MACRIS (MA Historical Cultural Resource Information System). Perhaps to start to just do three: Town Center, Pratt Farms and Lake Wyola. She spoke to the President of the Lake Wyola Association, who is concerned about signage. The Athol sign talks about Native Americans and the original Native American name for Athol. Do we know what the name would have been for the center of our town? Not sure enough to put on a sign. GC mentioned this is a long-term project. It took Leverett 10 years to get their signs made and installed. Some discussion on historic districts, and what we do or don't have in town. Historic Districts have to be voted on by the town, which has not been done. These districts are listed in MACRIS. Did Leverett vote on their districts? MC suggested that perhaps the owners of historical houses listed in MACRIS might be willing to buy a small sign with their house date (& name of early owner?) on it, as a fundraiser for the Commission.

New Business. Next meeting Wednesday March 24th at 7PM, by zoom.

Adjournment. JS made the motion, seconded by KC, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Temporary Secretary
Shutesbury Historical Commission