

Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for October 30, 2017, 4 PM

Approved at the 12/4/17 meeting

Shutesbury Town Hall – Technology Room

First meeting of the Shutesbury Historical Commission with new members. Karen Czerwonka is the only earlier member remaining since the May 4, 2017 meeting.

Members Present: Miriam DeFant, Karen Czerwonka, James Schilling-Cachet, Christopher Donta, Janice Stone, Kristin Van Patten, Mary Lou Conca (Associate). Members Absent: Henry Geddes. Also Present: Leslie Bracebridge (former Historical Commission member).

1. Appointing officers: Chairperson, Secretary, CPA Committee Representative

James Schilling-Cachet nominated Miriam DeFant to be Chair, Christopher Donta seconded. Five voted in favor, with Miriam abstaining. Miriam will be Chair of the Commission. Miriam nominated Janice Stone for Secretary, with Karen Czerwonka seconding. Five voted in favor, with Janice abstaining. Janice will be the Secretary of the Commission. James nominated Christopher Donta as CPA Committee Representative. Kristin Van Patten seconded, and five voted in favor with Christopher abstaining. Christopher will be the CPA Committee Representative.

2. Invitation to past HC members

Commissioners discussed how to recognize the former Historical Commission (HC) members for their long years of service, and how to have some continuity with what they have done on the Commission. Suggestions included thank-you cards, or having some kind of social "meet & greet" event after some future meeting.

3. Annual Report

The Commission is required to submit one each year. What should be done about this previous year (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017)? Leslie Bracebridge stated that she would write up the annual report for that period.

Leslie told the Commission the annual budget is approximately \$350, and there is approximately \$13,000 in the Special Funding account. The latter amount was earned through fundraising by the Friends of the Historical Commission. Joan Hanson is President of that group and in charge of the funds. Leslie briefly discussed some past projects the group has done, including the annual Memorial Day march at Quabbin, Celebrate Shutesbury, restoration of the West Schoolhouse, hikes, and municipal records protection.

4. Website update tasks

Commissioners discussed their wish to make the town history more accessible to the public, by putting as much of the available "current best knowledge" information on the website as possible. This will take some time, especially for the digitizing of the records. Christopher mentioned examples of Holyoke, North Brookfield, Northfield and Amherst for the Commission to look at. Commissioners decided to form a website subcommittee. Kristin, Janice and Christopher volunteered to be on it.

5. Unanticipated Business

Leslie mentioned that previously the Commission used the position of Associate Members for long-time members who were still interested, but could no longer actively participate in the Commission. Massachusetts Historical Commissions are allowed to have Alternate Members, appointed by the Selectboard, who can vote if needed in the absence of a Commissioner. Mary Lou Conca stated that she would like to be considered for this position in addition to the present Associate Member she has. Kristin made the motion, seconded by James, to ask the Selectboard to appoint Mary Lou as First Alternate member. All voted in favor.

6. Follow-up to June Nolumbeka Conference:

- Sample MOUs
- new CSL Preservation 501(c)(3) with Doug Harris and Lisa McLoughlin

Miriam and Leslie went to this conference in June. The group discussed a new 501(c)(3) (non-profit) that is being developed for preservation of ceremonial stone landscapes (CSL). It would make it easier to apply for grants and access the expertise of people like Doug Harris and Lisa McLoughlin. Miriam provided the Commissioners with 16 pages of handouts as background for the HC. Included in this material is a sample MOU which Wendell is presently executing.

7. Review of sample Archaeological Accountability Policies from Northfield/ Acquiring MHC town records for Shutesbury archives

Christopher mentioned that MA Historical Commission (MHC) is charged with archiving records for the state. Commissioners discussed requesting copies of any records MHC has for Shutesbury, but to receive them it requires a secure location and establishing an Archaeological Accountability Policy that meets MHC requirements. The materials given to each Commissioner at this meeting includes some examples of the paperwork, from Northfield and Erving. Miriam stated that the HC can adopt these policies without Town Meeting approval. Some towns, such as Montague and Deerfield, have done this. Nolumbeka has a dropbox with articles and documents about this.

8. Unanticipated Business, continued

Leslie stated that she had come to request permission from the HC to grant a request to view some old municipal records about the Bennett House. She had received the request but the HC needs to make the decision. The person is interested in applying to the DCR program for lease of the building for 25 years in exchange for restoring it. These old records about the house are in the HC's collection in the Old Town Hall. The Town Clerk is the keeper of Records (photos, public & private records), but the HC has copies of many. Commissioners discussed the request. Kristin made the motion, seconded by Janice, to allow Leslie to show the interested party the records. All voted in favor.

Commissioners discussed how they would like to see an inventory of what material the HC has. Then they can work on how to get it into digital format and available to the public. Perhaps they can get a grant to help with this, but they need to know what and how much there is first. They can discuss grant ideas at their next meeting.

Commissioners discussed how the Chair should handle correspondences to the HC. She has forwarded a number of emails sent to the HC, but Karen does not have email. Commissioners agreed there should be a paper copy of the documents in a binder in Town Hall so Karen (and the public) can come in and read them. Some items are a number of pages and members may not want to print them all out at home, such as the State Historical Commission Vision Plan.

Mary Lou mentioned her idea of creating a calendar of different doors in Shutesbury, to sell as a fundraiser for the HC. Commissioners discussed whether there were enough people in town to be worth the probable expense of printing the calendar, and it would only be sellable for one year. Perhaps note cards of the doors instead? Mary Lou would need to get permission first from anyone whose door was being included in this project. Mary Lou will check with the Friends of the Historical Commission, to see what it cost them for some of their fundraising projects.

9. Projects/goals for upcoming year

Commissioners offered initial ideas of possible projects for the HC. They included designation of an Historic District in the town center, restoration of the gravestones in the old cemeteries, making the historical documents more available to the public, the archaeology accountability policy, and a CSL project (inventory of CSL on town lands and willing private landowners). Discussions on these ideas included comments that the Historic District is a zoning issue, Commissioners should check with Leverett on what they have done (new signs around town); there is already a grant from CPA to do some restoration work at the cemetery, but a bid document has to be written to hire some organization or individual qualified to do the work (and train up to 20 volunteers to continue the work); and tribal leaders such as Doug Harris need to be the ones that designate a CSL.

10. Next Meeting Date

Commissioners agreed Monday afternoons are generally good. They agreed to hold their next meeting on Monday November 13 at 4PM. Miriam will work with Leslie to arrange a visit to the Old Town Hall HC records for those members interested in seeing them.

11. Unanticipated Business, continued

Commissioners discussed how to handle correspondences sent to the HC via email. Right now, the system just sends back an automatic response that the email was "received". They agreed that the automatic reply should be revised to tell people that anything they send to the HC is a public document, available to the public and kept for one year. Miriam made the motion, seconded by Christopher on this. All voted in favor. Miriam will check the HC emails and forward them as needed to the Commissioners.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary
Shutesbury Historical Commission

List of Documents used at Meeting:

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Wendell MA
2. 1/30/17 Northfield Historical Commission letter to MHC
3. Northfield Historical Commission Security for Confidential Files & Confidentiality Form
4. 2/12/16 Northfield Historical Commission letter to MHC regarding confidential files
5. 10/26/15 Erving Historical Commission letter to MHC

6. Northfield Historical Commission Archaeology Accountability Policy (2 pgs)
7. 10/30/17 email about Investigations into Gaps in Archaeology on 11/16/17 (2 pgs)
8. 10/25/17 email on State Historic Preservation Plan draft
9. 10/28/17 email from RG Cachat about who is welcome at Maunumuetash
10. 10/13/17 email from Mass Cultural Council on new round of grants available
11. 10/12/17 email from Preservation Massachusetts on Annual Meeting 11/9/17 (2 pgs)
12. 10/22/17 email from RG Cachat - request to include Shutesbury sites to NRHP (2 pgs)