

Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for February 7, 2019, 7 PM

Approved at the 4/4/19 meeting

Shutesbury Town Hall – Community Lounge downstairs

Members Present: Miriam DeFant, Henry Geddes, Janice Stone, Kristin Van Patten. Mary Lou Conca (Associate) also present.

Members Absent: Karen Czerwonka, Christopher Donta (attending CPC meeting at same time).

Visitors: Don Wakuluk.

Miriam DeFant was the Acting Chair of this meeting.

1. Discussion with guest Don Wakuluk about several timber harvests going on in Shutesbury, and their impact on cultural landscapes. They are using large equipment which wipes out the lower canopy of vegetation and stone monuments such as cellar holes and stone walls. The plan for one harvest area only shows 2 spots of cultural items on site, may be more. Mr. Wakuluk suggests the Commission create a bylaw requiring all forest harvest plans be reviewed by the Historical Commission for cultural resources. Commission discussed how this might be done. It was said that Chris Donta is doing similar work now for SWCA. Miriam stated she was sure some other towns have a cultural resource process, and we are interested but not actively working on it at this time. She suggested he contact her to be on the agenda for a future Historical Commission meeting to discuss this in more detail.
2. Reminder about Open Meeting Law (OML) and email communications. Miriam described her discussion with the Town Clerk about this. Only two members can communicate on a topic, in order to not have a quorum and be in violation of the OML. It does not allow one or both of the two original people to discuss the topic with another member of the Commission, which would then count as a quorum discussing it out of public meeting. There can be no substantive discussion by email, just determining a meeting date, distributing minutes and reading materials. She adds to the bottom of her emails the warning "please do not respond to this email" and suggest others do the same. No discussion, no questions.
3. Approval of minutes from July 30, 2018, August 20, 2018 and December 19, 2018. The first two were done by Janice, the third by Craig Pepin with some revisions by Miriam. Kristin made a motion to approve all three as submitted. Miriam seconded, and all voted in favor.
4. Status of gravestone restoration under CPA grant. Janice told the Commission she is very interested in having this project take place, and is worried that the CPC (Community Preservation Committee) may take back the money since it has been a few years. She will try to reach Walter Tibbetts, the Chair of the Cemetery Commission, to get an update on what is happening with that project. The CPC is meeting tonight, and she may go over there when this meeting is done to learn more. Commission members told her they would be interested and willing to participate in the volunteer training and restoration.

5. Annual Report finalization. Miriam passed around the latest draft of the Annual Report and asked if people were ready to vote on it. All agreed. Janice made the motion, seconded by Kristin, to approve the Annual Report as submitted.

6. Discussion of Resolution in support of changing the State Flag and Seal of Massachusetts. The background information had been emailed to members earlier to read over. The Resolution is specifically in support of a State Seal Commission to consider changing the Seal and Flag because of the inappropriate use of various images related to Native Americans on them. There are two bills currently in the MA legislature about this (H.D. 2968 and S.D. 1495). State Representative Natalie Blais and State Senator Jo Cumberford have already signed onto these bills. Miriam also had a Warrant Article Petition for Annual Town Meeting (ATM) in support of a State Seal Commission to investigate this issue. She asked if the members supported this Resolution and whether they would sign the Petition. Kristin made the motion, seconded by Henry, to support this Warrant Article for ATM. All voted in favor.

7. Discussion about the Old Town Hall restoration project and CPC application. Bob Groves has submitted an application for this work to the CPC, with the support of the Historical Commission, but we have not received any details on amount of money requested or work to be done. Chris Donta should know more about this, as a member of the CPC. Janice showed some photos he had sent of the interior of Old Town Hall. One showed the library's kayaks being stored on the benches in there. The Historical Commission members felt this was inappropriate, and should ask the Town Administrator about this. Janice made a motion to write a letter to Becky Torres about removing the kayaks to somewhere else. Kristin seconded and all voted in favor.

8. Discussion of Cultural Council grant proposal. Miriam told the Commissioners that our grant application was turned down by the Shutesbury Cultural Council, and money was being sent instead to a Turners Falls group for a larger event held there yearly. There was some discussion about whether in-town projects should receive priority over out of town projects. Miriam asked the group if the Commission would be willing to use \$500 from our account to cover the cost of participating in the Local Cultural Council program to bring in Doug Harris, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office to continue discussion of Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Landscapes in the Northeast. Tier 2 of the program would be "a more participatory training process. The presentation will cover how to identify Ceremonial Stone Landscapes in the town and how to work with the town's historical commission to develop a protected status. Participants are invited to bring photographs of structures they wish to ask about. The process will include identifying a group of people to lay out a process for creating a protected status and begin a dialogue with the town's historic commission." (Emily Volz email). Miriam is in touch with Emily Volz, who is organizing this program and she thinks we can still get in. Janice made the motion to use \$500 from the Historical Commission funds to participate in this program. Kristin seconded, and all voted in favor. Miriam will contact Emily Volz with the news.

9. Unanticipated business. Mary Lou asked if the vacant seat on the Historical Commission is going to be filled, and when? Miriam stated she felt it was best for the Historical Commission to attend a Selectboard meeting to discuss selection of another member, since it is their (SB)

decision in the end. She will ask the Selectboard about setting a time and date for the joint meeting, so it can be posted. Miriam asked about when the Commission should hold their annual meeting. Perhaps the March meeting? Next meeting is March 7, 2019 at 7PM.

10. Adjournment. Kristin made the motion, seconded by Henry, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary
Shutesbury Historical Commission

List of Documents used at Meeting:

1. Agenda for this meeting.
2. Draft minutes for July 30, 2018, August 20, 2018 and December 19, 2018
3. Draft Annual Report.
4. Copies of the Resolution in support of changing the State flag and Seal.
5. Copies of H.D. 2968 and S.D. 1495
6. Warrant Article Petition in support of State Seal Commission