

Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes for February 10, 2020, 7:00 PM

Approved at July 20, 2020 meeting

Town Hall

Members Present: Karen Czerwonka, Mary Lou Conca, Henry Geddes, Janice Stone.

Members absent: Chris Donta, Craig Pepin

Old Business

Update on CPC 1829 Town Hall project. Nothing new to report.

Draft letter to Tribes & other experts about collaboration (from last year). Commission members reviewed the last draft of the letter and found no need for changes. Janice will add a letterhead and find the addresses for the THPOs and our local expert and send a letter out to each of them. Janice mentioned that this is the first step to getting help identifying possible CSLs in town, on public land or with willing private landowners. We need an MOU like Wendell and Northfield have with the four THPOs (Narragansett, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot), and hopefully also with our local expert R. Cachet-Schilling. None have been approached yet on this.

Update on Phase 1B archaeological work January 14-16 off Wendell Rd. Janice summarized her visit to the site during the Phase 1B field investigation in January. She watched the archaeologists doing their work and asked some questions. The archaeologists had not found any Native American artifacts or evidence of use through their digging and sifting of soil across the site while she was there. She mentioned the large glacial erratic at the top of the hill & highest point in town as a possible place of interest, and also the “mound” at the location of the old red balloon tied around a tree (site of the cell tower). She showed them the mound location. Janice told the group she has requested a copy of the report for the Commission. Mary Lou told the group she had spoken with Chris Skelly at MHC (MA Historical Commission) about the cell tower, and was told to talk to another staff person named Nadia.

Approval of Minutes December 9, 2019. Mary Lou suggested correction of two names (pg 1 & 3). Henry made the motion to accept the minutes as amended. Karen seconded and all voted in favor.

Old & New Business

Review/approval of Annual Report draft. Commissioners reviewed the draft report and voted to approve it as written.

Discussion about Scenic Roads bylaw & other ways to protect stone landscapes. Janice handed out some additional materials, including a 3-page document from Upton answering common questions about a Scenic Roads Bylaw; a portion of a Powerpoint presentation from the 2019 MA Historic Preservation Conference on “Conserving Gravestones, Stone Walls and Memorial in the Landscape” about preserving stone walls; a copy of the MOU between the town of Wendell and 4 THPOs; and the Town of Northfield Historical Commission Archaeology Accountability Policy. Discussion followed about protecting stone features on the landscape, from stone walls and foundations to CSLs (Ceremonial Stone Landscapes). Commissioners agreed a good first step was to approach the Planning Board about a Scenic

Roads bylaw for Annual Town Meeting. Scenic Road bylaws are usually enacted through the Planning Board of a town, but may include consultation with the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission on the permitting. Mary Lou made the motion, seconded by Karen to proceed with discussions with the Planning Board on this. All voted in favor. Janice will put together materials and talk to the Planning Board about the Historical Commission's interest in doing this. Mary Lou told the Commission she had contacted MHC to ask if they had any information on the protection of CSLs and was told they were not authorized to answer her.

Locating reference materials on CSLs. Janice had requested and received a copy of the Annual Town Meeting warrant article petition from 2017 from J. Schilling-Cachet. This might be something for the Historical Commission to consider trying again at Town Meeting next year (starting with the Scenic Roads bylaw this year). She asked if any Commission members were willing to try and find copies of some of the references listed in the article for members to be able to read. Mary Lou offered to try and find them.

Consider preparing applications for National Register of Historic Places for Guideboard and 1829 Town Hall. Discussion was brief on this tonight. Mary Lou asked about an application to cover Shutesbury Center. Some of the Commissioners told her it had been considered a number of years ago but there was opposition from property owners.

Unanticipated business at the time of posting, as time permits. Mary Lou showed the Commissioners an interesting booklet from the Leverett Historical Commission on historical properties in town. An interesting idea for our Commission to consider. Janice told the Commission that the SHRAB Veterans Grant application for painting of the War Memorial on the Common and restoration of 7 gravestones of Veterans at West Cemetery was approved.

Next Meeting Date. Monday March 9th at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment. Mary Lou made the motion, seconded by Karen, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary
Shutesbury Historical Commission

List of Documents used at Meeting:

1. Agenda for this meeting.
2. Draft letter to Tribes.
3. Draft minutes for December 9, 2019.
4. Draft Annual Report for 2019.
4. Scenic Roads Bylaw info from Upton MA.
5. Stone wall preservation slides from MHC 2019 Conference Powerpoint on "Conserving Gravestones, Stone Walls, and Memorials in the Landscape".
6. Copy of the MOU between the town of Wendell and 4 THPOs.
7. Town of Northfield Historical Commission Archaeology Accountability Policy.
8. Copy of May 2017 Warrant Article petition "Resolution to Preserve Native American Historical Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties".