

## **Historical Commission Meeting**

**Minutes for October 20, 2020, 7:00 PM**  
*Approved at November 17, 2020 meeting*  
**Zoom Remote Access Meeting**

Members Present: Mary Lou Conca, Miriam DeFant, Henry Geddes, Janice Stone, John Walter.

Members absent: Karen Czerwonka (Zoom problems)

Visitors: Greg Caulton (not sworn in yet).

*Henry Geddes hosted the meeting.*

Miriam is also attending another Zoom meeting tonight, so will not be able to stay. She and John Walter are now new members of the Historical Commission. Greg Caulton will also be, but has to be sworn in first. Chris Donta and Craig Pepin both resigned last month as planned.

### **Old Business**

Update on SHRAB grant: Gravestone Restoration Project & painting War Memorial. Janice stated that the Gravestone Restoration has been completed for this grant and for the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding. That includes a workshop for volunteers which was held last Saturday. She is still trying to get in touch with the painter for the War Memorial work, which hopefully can still be done this year. She mentioned to the group the need to get the Guideboard repainted as well. It is flaking badly, especially on one side. She saw a newly painted one in Montague Center and contacted their Historical Commission for the name of the person who did it. She has that info now. This could perhaps be a CPC (Community Preservation Committee) grant application.

Approval of Minutes September 10, 2020. Some Commissioners had not read them yet, so this will be brought up at next meeting.

### **Old and New Business**

Reorganization of Historical Commission. Commissioners discussed positions and candidates. Henry Geddes was nominated to be Chair. He mentioned that he did not get appointed to the Planning Board, so he will have time for this. John Walter said he could be the CPC (Community Preservation Committee) representative. Janice will send Allen Hanson of the CPC an email notifying him of the change and introducing John. Commissions discussed what the Chair would be responsible for. Suggestions were interfacing with the public, setting the agenda, responding to emails. Miriam agreed to be Secretary, responsible for the minutes and to work with the Chair on the agenda and other items. John Walter offered to be Vice-Chair. John made the motion to accept the slate of officers as follows:

Henry Geddes, Chair; John Walter Vice-Chair; Miriam DeFant Secretary; John Walter Historical Commission representative to the CPC. Henry seconded and all voted in favor. Janice will step down from the Secretary position after the meeting. She will complete the minutes from this meeting and finalize some others, complete the Annual Report and then be done.

Copying the remaining audio tapes & making others available to public. Craig has completed what he could for this project and returned materials to Leslie Bracebridge. Greg Caulton offered to work on completing the digitizing of these tapes. Janice will connect him by email to Craig to get what advice he can offer on how this was done. She will also let Leslie know that Greg is willing to work on this. There is actually lots more to do, but these are a good way to get started.

Other Projects. Mary Lou told the Commission she spoke with someone from Leverett about their nice Historic District signs. She suggests Shutesbury should do similar ones. She checked with MA Historical Commission and the Historic District designation does not require any restrictions on private property owners. Janice asked how much did the Leverett signs cost? Mary Lou will check. Janice said she thought someone in town had helped put them together. Henry knows someone who has done sign work for the Historical Commission before. He will check to see if he is interested. Perhaps this could be a CPC grant application?

Annual Report for Historical Commission. Janice will work on this and have draft ready for review at next meeting.

Application to CPC for restoration of Guideboard on Common. Commission decided not to work on this right now. Probably not all that expensive (around \$1000?) and could be done with funds the Commission has.

Locating Reference materials on CSLs (Ceremonial Stone Landscapes) & Possible Purchase of some books for the library. John stated that Shutesbury is unique in MA for the number of stone structures we have in town. He asked if someone could take this on as a project, to get it moving?

Discussion about Scenic Roads bylaw & other ways to protect stone landscapes. Miriam told the Commissioners that the new Solar Bylaw has more protective language for CSLs. There are two new solar projects being submitted to the Conservation Commission and Planning Board by Jones. There are 170 acres of land under review for new solar development with these two projects. What role can the Historical Commission play to help identify and protect any stone groupings and CSLs that may be out there? The Solar Bylaw only has 35 days for discovery of possible features. The applicants must show they have done due diligence on trying to find out if there are features there, and maybe hire an archaeologist for the review. How will they find experts in this?

John stated that he thought the role of the Historical Commission should be educational, gathering resources. He would like to see training of people to identify these features, but not on private property unless the owner is willing. Commission discussed role of Historical Commission in protecting these features on private land, if that land is proposed for development. This would be through the Planning Board.

Miriam suggested the Historical Commission communicate their interest in playing a role in this process to the Planning Board. We could be a party in the review process, discuss situations with peer reviewers, and help the due diligence process. She suggested a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss this. Commission wants to be proactive in these cases, we know contacts they may not. The Planning Board will have to sign off that the applicants have done

their due diligence. The Historical Commission could review the information as well and provide input.

Discussion continued on educating the public on what these stone structures are, how to identify them, who determines whether something is Native American or not (the THPOs of Federally Recognized Tribes), the problem that some archaeologists will not acknowledge these historical cultural sites, and how to recruit experts and authorities to help us. If we had relationships (such as MOUs) with tribes, we could ask for their input. Mary Lou said she has a friend (Rhonda Anderson) who works in the Massachusetts Council on Indian Affairs, and will contact her about this. Ms. Anderson has stated that most tribes do not want MOUs with communities. What about Nolumbeka? Miriam suggested the Commission write to the five Tribes and ask for collaboration.

Miriam suggested Henry draft a letter to the Planning Board, asking to meet with them to discuss this idea. John stated that the town should have a sense of pride that we have such special sites in town. Janice suggested the Commission work at adding more information on CSLs on the Historical Commission website, so there is a place people can go to learn more. Miriam made a motion that Henry draft a letter to the Planning Board, expressing our interest in participating in any upcoming reviews of development projects involving the solar bylaw, and a chance for us to talk with them about it. Janice seconded and all voted in favor.

### **Unanticipated Business**

Henry recommended a book he has been reading called “Firsting and Lasting” by Jean M. O’Brien (writing Indians out of existence in New England).

John invited all the Commissioners to his house on Sunday to see some stone structures in his yard.

For next meeting’s agenda: how to update the Almanac information that is published yearly by the Greenfield Recorder. Need to give them some new information

**Next Meeting Dates.** Tuesday November 17 at 7PM.

**Adjournment.** Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone, Secretary  
Shutesbury Historical Commission