

**Shutesbury Historical Commission**  
**Minutes – 2/7/22**  
**(approved 3/7/22)**  
*Virtual Meeting*

**Meeting start:** 7:02 pm

**Commissioners Present:** Henry Geddes (Chair), Miriam DeFant, Janice Stone, Mary Lou Conca, Karen Czerwonka

**Commissioners Absent:** Greg Caulton

**Others Present:** Micha (name not given)

**Approved 1/26/21 Minutes:**

January 26, 2022 minutes are not ready for review.

**Letter of support for Belchertown state-owned land repatriation to Nipmuc Nation:** The Commission received a request from a local activist group, Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) to write a letter in support of an effort to allow the Nipmuc People to assume ownership of a parcel of state-owned land in Belchertown. DeFant received the request through a network of people associated with the Karuna Peace Center. Stone: the property is about 200 acres, 150 acres of which are woodland. A draft letter was reviewed. The parcel is controlled by a non-profit farm that is relinquishing it after its lease expired. DeFant had an email communication with Chief Cheryl Toney Holley, Nipmuc Nation, who is in support of this effort and who expressed appreciation for community support. The Commission discussed the importance of respecting tribal sovereignty with land repatriation; only tribal governments and communities should decide how to manage and use land they possess. **Geddes moved to approve and send the letter of support to the Board of the Lampson Brook Farm and other individuals. Stone seconded. Approved by unanimous roll call vote: 5/0.** DeFant will send a copy to the Nipmuc Nation. Conca asked to see the final draft. **Final version will be distributed.**

**Policy regarding Old Town Hall HC collection access:** Geddes: there is an approved policy for access to the HC collection in Old Town Hall. Conca is interested in seeing the collection. Geddes: at this time, town buildings are closed; Conca would need someone to accompany her; DeFant and Bracebridge hold keys to the storage closet; a visit can be arranged at a later date when the pandemic is less of a restriction. Geddes: when does Conca want to see the collection and why? Conca: as soon as can be arranged, so that I have the ability to know what is being discussed at meetings; I want an equal opportunity to view the collection. Geddes: you need a tour. Bracebridge is the only one who can really explain it to you. Stone: the Old Town Hall is very cold this time of year and the storage closet is a very cramped, tiny space with no room for social distancing. DeFant: reminds the Commission that access policy was established in 1995; not open to the public; a private collection; cannot remove materials; not a library; researchers can request materials that the Commission then copies on their behalf; important that the organizational system remains intact with a limited number of people accessing it; previous discussions by the Commission had agreed that Bracebridge would hold a key as a special

research aid and DeFant would hold the other as the Secretary. DeFant would like to formalize Bracebridge's role. **DeFant moves for the Commission to appoint Leslie Bracebridge as a volunteer research consultant, with the authority to have access to the Commission's collection in Old Town Hall and to follow up on research requests on behalf of the Commission. Stone seconded the motion.** Conca: isn't Bracebridge already an Associate Commissioner? Isn't this item off the agenda? I don't understand why it is so difficult for my reviewing the records. I don't understand why a commissioner's request to review the Commission's records is being confounded. **Approved by unanimous roll call vote: 5/0.**

**DeFant moves for the Commission to recommend that the Select Board appoint Leslie Bracebridge as an Associate Commissioner. Czwerwonka seconded the motion.** Discussion: Conca asked if Bracebridge is an Associate? DeFant: no. **Roll Call: Conca: nay; Czwerwonka: aye; DeFant: aye; Geddes: aye; Stone: aye. Approved by roll call 4/1.**

**CPA Guideboard Proposal:** DeFant reviewed final application draft via screenshare on Zoom for the CPC application for restoration of the guideboard on the Town Common. Application is due on 2/10/22. Hoping to get a small donation from the Friends of the SHC. DeFant: not clear what other grants can be applied for. MHC's grant program is only for sites that have been nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and that process takes 1.5 to 2 years, before the grant application could be submitted. Commission could do this in the future, nominate structure or all of Town Common as a historic district. CPA application is for \$10,000 from the CPA; \$5,000 from SHC funds. Stone: how will you get bids? DeFant: Commission must flesh out the Scope of Work; give the Scope to vendors; collect bids and review with the Commission and Select Board. Stone: is this to be an informal solicitation of bids or will there be sealed bids? DeFant: informal review of bids. Stone: when will the final decision be made on what to do with the guideboard? DeFant: won't have a complete picture until the work starts; would ask the vendor to assess the structure and come back to the Commission with feedback. **Geddes moved to approve the final draft of the CPA application for the Guideboard Restoration Project as amended. Conca: seconded. Approved by unanimous roll call vote: 5/0.**

**SHRAB Institutional Regrant Application:** Application has been submitted.

**South Brook Conservation Area Mapping:** No updates.

**New Business:** DeFant: The Jones Library contacted the Commission to donate some antique annual reports from their collection.

**Geddes: moved to adjourn; Stone seconded; Approved by unanimous roll call vote: 5/0.**

Adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: 3/7/22 at 7:00 p.m.

**Documents Used:**

- Agenda
- Draft letter regarding Belchertown Land Remediation proposal
- CPA Guideboard Final Application

*Respectfully submitted by Miriam DeFant, Secretary, 3/8/22*