

Shutesbury Historical Commission
Minutes – 11/30/22
(approved 1/25/23)
Virtual Meeting

Meeting start: 7:10 pm

Commissioners Present: Henry Geddes (Chair), Miriam DeFant, Bert Fernandez, Karen Czerwonka, Matteo Pangallo, Janice Stone

Commissioners Absent: Greg Caulton

Others Present: Leslie Bracebridge (Associate Commissioner), Susan Millinger, Peter Hamm (Consultant), Mary Lou Davis (Consultant), Mary Lou Conca, Walter Tibbets

Minutes:

Cannot approve 8/10/22 minutes at this time due to lack of a qualifying quorum present; table for another meeting.

Geddes moved to approve 10/12/22 draft minutes with minor edits. Second: Fernandez. Roll Call: DeFant: aye; Pangallo: abstain; Geddes: aye; Stone: aye; Czerwonka: abstain; Fernandez: aye. So moved.

Cemetery Commission CPC Proposal: CPC proposal to do another round of restoration work on historic headstones. Cemetery Commission is requesting letter of support from Historical Commission and financial support, asking for \$1,000. DeFant: SHC has committed up to \$5,000 for Guideboard Restoration Project; cautions the SHC about overcommitting resources until the project is finished. **DeFant moved for the SHC to draft to draft a letter of support and commit to \$500 of support for the CPC project from the SHC Donation Fund. Second: Fernandez. Roll Call: DeFant: aye; Pangallo: aye; Geddes: aye; Stone: aye; Czerwonka: aye; Fernandez: aye. So moved.**

The SHC welcomes Pangallo who was recently appointed.

Guideboard Restoration Project: The SHC was joined by two restoration specialists who are interested in the project, Hamm and Davis. Peter Hamm, based in Wales, MA, is a preservationist who has 30 years of experience restoring historic structures, including the Emily Dickinson House. He works closely with another conservator with expertise in decorative painting, Mary Lou Davis. They advised that the structure may be too fragile to benefit from restoration as planned and that the Town may wish to consider another proposal. The specialists also advised that the use of epoxy to “stiffen” and reinforce the fragile wood will probably not be possible due to the chemical interaction between epoxies and antique, oil-based paints.

One option discussed was creating a historically authentic replica for the Town Common and relocating the guideboard to another location where it could be protected from the elements and could be available to the community for the future, perhaps with interpretive signage about the guideboard’s historical significance (e.g., it lists the names of defunct Quabbin towns). This

option would preserve the guideboard's presence on Town Common and also preserve the original structure. A historically accurate replica could be created by a qualified specialist who could copy the decorative painting and patina. Historical photos of the structure should inform any restoration work. Bracebridge does not believe the Historical Commission has any photos besides those already reviewed. The structure's appearance has changed over the years. The roof structure did not always have cedar shingles and a "cupola" shape. Until it has been thoroughly assessed, it is impossible to know how much of the structure is "original" or part of various repairs over the years.

Davis recommended reaching out to the Library of Congress to research this type of structure. DeFant will follow up on this. Davis and Hamm emphasized to the SHC their opinion that the Guideboard is a rare artifact of high historical value. Davis advised that, in her experience, public support for these kinds of projects is very high, especially when a Historical Commission plays a leadership role.

If the original guideboard is moved to an alternative location, it would not need require restoration. The SHC discussed the lack of available conditioned spaces for such a display. Possible locations discussed include Town Hall, Old Town Hall, and the new library building.

As an alternative, the structure could also remain outside, perhaps with weather protection, perhaps under a gazebo-type roof structure.

It is also possible that the Town could pursue a hybrid of these options: keep the guideboard on the Common with the initial planned restoration work but add a protective roof structure to protect it.

To move forward with any of these options—restoration or replication—the specialists suggested a possible professional paint analysis which entails collecting small samples of material from the structure and conducting a composition analysis to determine the age and type of materials used. CPC funds could not be used for a replica but could possibly be used for paint testing and perhaps other ancillary expenses. Replica would require alternative funding sources.

The SHC agreed that Select Board input would be helpful, especially to determine if the Town has an interest in relocating the Guideboard to another location, such as the new library site. Geddes will reach out to Select Board to get topic on their agenda. DeFant will prepare a summary of discussion points to share with Select Board. DeFant and Geddes will attend a CPC meeting to provide an update.

DeFant agreed to reach out Bob Groves, to find out what kind of paint was used for the last restoration.

Geddes moves to adjourn. Stone seconds. Roll Call: DeFant: aye; Pangallo: aye; Geddes: aye; Stone: aye; Czerwonka: aye; Fernandez: aye. So moved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Documents Used:

Agenda

Draft Guideboard Restoration Scope of Work

Draft Minutes for 8/12/22 and 10/12/22

Respectfully submitted by Miriam DeFant, Secretary, 1/22/23