

## West Newbury

### Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place:** 7:00 pm, March 16, 2022, Town Offices

**Members Present:** Chairman Bob Janes; Bob Belmont; Jennifer Conway; Elisa Grammer; Associate Member Dot Cavanaugh. Indian sign advocates Molly Hawkins, Francesca Pomerantz, Geordie Vining, Kristine Malpica.

#### **Proposed Revisions for Historic Markers**

Mr. Vining, Ms. Hawkins, Ms. Pomerantz, and Ms. Malpica described their work in developing proposed replacement signs for the ones concerning Native Americans that had been removed from Indian Hill and Turkey Hill Road.

*The Commission generally viewed the replacement language favorably except that 1) the people taken captive at the Brown home were not limited to Brown family members, so using something like the phrase "Brown household" would be more accurate and 2) the proposed amount of words for each sign was far greater than usually on these signs, meaning that the letter size would have to be extremely small. Ms. Grammer provided some comparative word/character counts and some suggested edits, and Ms. Conway expressed concerns about the length of the wording. Mr. Belmont said that it would be useful to show the draft signs to other people to see if they readily understand the message. It was generally agreed that QRs could be used to point people to a more detailed story.*

*The group will work on these issues and return to the Commission at the next meeting. Ms. Grammer will provide information about the Haverhill Sign Center, which has made historic markers for West Newbury in recent years.*

#### **Historic Sites Survey Update & Proposed Resources to Be Included in Phase 3**

Ms. Conway confirmed that West Newbury had received the Phase 3 grant award for a total of \$30,000; \$15,000 would be required from the Town to match the \$15,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In a 2021 Town Meeting, \$12.5K from the Community Preservation Act was awarded for the project (the ask was based on prior grants for Phases 1 and 2 totaling \$25K each) and a warrant article for the \$2.5K supplement to cover our share of the additional \$15K required to match the amount the MHC is providing in the FY22 grants. The MHC, which is still working from home due to COVID, will be providing a list of consultants in the next months and we will be working on our list of resources to be included in Phase 3.

Mr. Janes had a list of additional suggestions, which he provided to Ms. Conway. Ms. Grammer noted that the current survey for the G.A.R. Library was done in the 1970s and could be improved upon, and agreed with Ms. Conway that some items covered in group surveys in Phase 2 could be done again with greater detail. She had also provided a list of our Historically Significant resources so that they can be included. Ms. Conway also suggested including some landscapes. *The Commission*

*agreed that West Newbury landscapes are threatened due to development pressures, so preserving them via the Survey was a very good idea. Ms. Grammer will provide a list of scenic landscapes from the Open Space Committee report.*

### **FY23 Historical Commission Budget & Other Town Meeting Items**

Mr. Janes will appear before the Finance Committee to discuss the Historic Sites Survey funding.

*The Commission agreed that we would keep funding at the current level.* Ms. Conway noted that we will have additional expenses associated with send-out of letters to property owners in Phase 3, but that will not happen in the upcoming fiscal year.

### **Town Records & Annual Town Report Digitization Update**

Ms. Cavanaugh and Ms. Grammer reported that we hope to have remaining pre-1880 reports back in March, with digitization complete. Town Reports from the early 1900's forward are not on the Library website, provided by year, and more are coming. The excess reports (beyond the 3 preserved hard copy sets) have been put into recycling.

Mr. Janes noted that the G.A.R. Library has a wealth of Civil War materials, some of which should be digitized. The Commission discussed other items that could be digitized, such as Adelaide Janes' books of news clippings

### **Monthly Minute Histories—Orin Warren**

*The Commission approved the Minute History story about Orin Warren. It was also agreed that Mr. Belmont will provide a story about the Veteran Firemen's Association, to be published when the celebration of that group's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs sometime this year.*

### **Proposed Historical Commission Gift Account**

*By unanimous vote, the Commission approved the draft language to be presented to the Select Board to establish a gift account for the Historical Commission.*

### **Other Business**

Mr. Belmont described his work on the history of West Newbury's fire department. He is interested in erecting a historic marker for the first firehouse, which was located where St. Ann's church is now. He is also interested in researching and writing up the history of schools in West Newbury.

Ms. Grammer said that she had spoken with Jen Munson, the Commission's newest member. Ms. Munson has expertise as a curator of historic items and works at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. She is interested in historic landscapes and when on the Groveland Historical Commission, got grants and set up Elm Park there.

Ms. Munson teaches on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday so cannot attend meetings on those days. *The Commission decided to change the meeting date to the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is slated for April 5.*

### **Minutes**

*The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022.*

### **Adjournment**

8:20 pm

### **Meeting Documents**

Draft wording for Indian historic markers

Draft motion for Gift Account

Draft Orin Warren story

Warrant article request for \$5K

Compiled list of prior sites surveyed and proposed sites to date

List of significant resources

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer