

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, August 21, 2018, 1910 Building

Members Present: Chairman Bob Janes; Jennifer Conway; Dot Cavanaugh; Elisa Grammer

Reorganization of the Board

The Commission voted 4-0-0 to re-elect Bob Janes Chairman. Ms. Grammer volunteered to take minutes and to update the Historical Commission webpage.

The Commission agreed to meet regularly every 2nd Monday of the month in the 2nd floor hearing room of the 1910 Building.¹

Historic Building Inventory

The Commission considered the status of the first part of West Newbury's historic building inventory, which focused on Main Street. The draft has been completed and awaits final Massachusetts Historical Commission approval so that the final payment may be made. Payment occurs through the Town's Community Preservation Committee, which is waiting to hear about this.

Former Commission Member Jeff Clewley had been in touch with the state historical commission, which has had the draft under review for several months. *Chairman Janes will talk with Mr. Clewley, seeking any updates. Ms. Conway offered to take up Mr. Clewley's role of contacting the state commission if need be.*

Once the initial portion of the Historic Building Inventory has been finalized, the Commission will turn to:

- 1) Publicizing the Inventory in the newspaper and on social media, including posting it on the Commission webpage;
- 2) Preparing a letter to property owners with such information as
 - a. The property's inventory results;
 - b. Steps for Historic Preservation National Registry status;
 - c. Facts pertaining to façade preservation easements;
- 3) Considering another grant for further work on an inventory beyond Main Street.

The Commission also agreed to gather information about plaques for historic buildings. Mr. Janes indicated that Rowley had a program of acquiring and placing such plaques.

Carr Post

The Carr Post Committee needs two members from the Historical Commission, one of whom is Mr. Janes. *It was agreed to wait to identify the second member until the full Commission membership is in*

¹ The Commission subsequently revised this to the 3d Wednesday of the month.

attendance. Ms. Grammer volunteered to fill out and update the Carr Post Committee webpage as that committee's members may desire.

As to potential uses for the Carr Post, Mr. Janes suggested a military museum, where records and items concerning Town veterans, sailors and soldiers could be stored and displayed, in addition to cemetery records. Ms. Cavanaugh noted that the Haverhill Historical Society Museum receives state funds in connection with its role as Visitors' Information Center containing brochures about local places of interest. Ms. Grammer suggested consulting with Annie Sterling in Town Offices about patterns of increasing demand for use of Town meeting space.

West Newbury Cemeteries

Mr. Janes, who has researched and collected extensive data about the Town cemeteries, particularly as concerns veterans' gravesites, reported that the various Town cemeteries are badly overgrown and in serious need of a cleanup and then regular maintenance. He has been in contact with the cemeteries' boards/trustees, who are aging, increasingly unable to manage maintenance, and lack successors to take on these tasks.

Mr. Janes said he has discussed the idea of centralizing a group of trustees for the Town cemeteries. Perhaps responsibility for cemetery maintenance could be moved to the Department of Public Works, as has been done in other towns. Mr. Janes explained that a cemetery that accepts members of the public (as opposed to family members only) is a public space.

The Commission generally agreed to pursue the matter of looking for options to restore and maintain the cemeteries, as consistent with the M.G.L. Ch. 40 § 8D mandate to conduct researches for and report findings regarding places of historic or archeological value and make recommendations to the Selectmen.

Regarding cemetery restoration and recordkeeping, the Commission determined to build on the work of Susan Follensbee (whose collected data ended with graves from roughly the 1990s forward). Ms. Conway volunteered to map cemeteries and said that her Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) group is holding a class in grave cleaning, which may be open to non-members. Mr. Janes added that one Donald Janvern in Newbury does gravestone cleaning and may be able to advise.

Ms. Conway noted that next year's Town Bicentennial may provide an opportunity to generate enthusiasm among townspeople to volunteer for cemetery restoration. Mr. Janes observed that a group of recovering addicts in Salisbury performs community service by cleaning cemeteries in the surrounding areas.

Ms. Conway and Mr. Janes agreed to pursue the ideas set forth above.

Other Business:

The Commission reviewed Ms. Conway's draft annual Historical Commission Report to be included in the Annual Town Report. In response to Ms. Cavanaugh's suggestion, she will add a discussion of the proposed Demolition Delay Bylaw, relying on Commission-submitted materials contained in the appendix to the [Spring 2017 Finance Committee Booklet](#).

Mr. Janes reported that he has learned that he is a member of the Stormwater Drain Committee, which is tasked with preparing a report to the state every five years. Apparently one of the issues to be examined is the impact, if any, of storm drainage on historic properties.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Next Meeting

September 10, 2018 at 7 p.m.

Meeting Documents

- Ms. Conway's draft annual report
- Draft Historic Building Inventory

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer