

## West Newbury

### Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place:** 7:00 pm, June 24, 2019, 1910 Building

**Members Present:** Chairman Bob Janes; Dot Cavanaugh; Jennifer Conway; Paul Knezek, Elisa Grammer.

#### Historic Inventory

Ms. Conway explained that our Request for Quotes for West Newbury Phase 2 Historic Sites Survey needs to be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission by the end of this week. The format is somewhat changed from that used for Phase 1, but *she will have a draft for review by tomorrow.*

#### Historic District National Register of Historic Places Listing

Ms. Conway drafted a letter to homeowners explaining that the Town intends to pursue National Register historic district listings for locations encompassing their properties. *The Commission voted 5-0-0 to approve this letter.* Ms. Grammer will help with mail merge and address labels for these mailings.

#### Historic Markers

##### Quaker Meetinghouse

Mr. Janes noted that this marker is falling apart and needs replacement. *The Commission voted 5-0-0 to use funds from the FY 20 Historical Commission budget to purchase a replacement marker.* Ms. Grammer will pursue this once the new fiscal year begins in July.

##### Julian D. Steele/ Condition of Town Hall

Ms. Cavanaugh and Ms. Grammer reported that they met with Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Wayne Amaral and the recommendation is to erect a historic marker in the same style as the others to the left of the Town Hall front door. The post will be installed in the fall and the marker will be unveiled in February, Black History month. The sign will read, "At this site in 1952 Julian D. Steele was unanimously elected town moderator, becoming the first African-American in the state to hold this position." *The Commission voted 5-0-0 to accept this recommendation, and to pursue Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funding for the marker and for a small reception at the unveiling.* Ms. Grammer will work on the CPC application.

Ms. Cavanaugh and Ms. Grammer also said that DPW will be removing the large trees and bushes directly in front of Town Hall because they may be harmful to the building and because DPW intends to paint. They toured the building with Mr. Amaral, and issues including spongy floors and potential knob and tube wiring were discussed. Mr. Amaral endorsed the notion of a survey of the building. They also examined the detritus on and behind the stage, including large stacks of wooden chairs that are no longer usable, present a potential fire hazard, and could be sold as antiques. Ms.

Grammer noted that she provided Town Manager Angus Jennings information about the chairs and their current market value but has not had a response.

Ms. Cavanaugh and Ms. Grammer also met later at Town Hall with Architect Peter Ringenbach, who reviewed the potential issues already flagged and suggested first consulting with the West Newbury Inspection Department, whose experts might take a look at the building. Ms. Cavanaugh reported that she spoke briefly with Town Inspector Glenn Clohecy who said he would be happy to help. *The Commission generally agreed that it makes sense to look at the soundness of Town Hall.* Ms. Cavanaugh and Ms. Grammer will attempt to obtain Mr. Jennings' approval to consult with the Inspection Department.

Ms. Cavanaugh reported on the prospects for expanded parking behind Town Hall. The land that might be used is landlocked with only a point connecting to Town-owned property, making it unclear how additional parking space could be obtained.

### **Frances Keegan Marquis Potential Historic Marker**

Ms. Grammer provided a timeline and additional information about Captain Frances Keegan Marquis, a West Newbury native who was the first woman to lead an overseas contingent of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps overseas to work in Algiers at General Eisenhower's headquarters. She suggested that the Commission might consider an additional historic marker in honor of Captain in 2021. Captain Marquis' medals from the French for her service are in the West Newbury Historical Society's Hills House.

### **Digitizing Civil War Items**

Mr. Janes stated that several boxes in the library contain important Civil War items, including young men's applications to enlist and G.A.R. association minutes. He proposed to seek CPC funding to digitize and preserve these items. Mr. Janes proposed consulting with Town Clerk Michael McCarron about his experience digitizing Town records and pursuing CPC funding for this project. *The Commission voted 5-0-0 in support of this project.*

### **Minutes**

*The Commission voted 5-0-0 to approve minutes of May 16, 2019, as revised.*

### **Next meeting**

July 17, 2019

### **Adjourn**

The Commission adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

### **Meeting Documents**

Documents pertaining to the Phase 2 Historic Sites Survey  
Letter to homeowners re: Historic District

Email to Town Manager with attachment re: chairs  
Timeline and news article re Frances Keegan Marquis

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer