

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, August 22, 2019, 1910 Building

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

Additional Participant: Town Counsel Michael McCarron

Historic Inventory

Town Counsel Michael McCarron participated in this discussion. The Commission reviewed the submissions of each candidate to perform Phase 2 of the Historic Sites Survey and evaluated them using the applicable criteria. It concluded that both sets of candidates appeared highly qualified and offered high-quality proposals. The Commission determined to select the Spies and Frontiero team, which had performed the Phase 1 study, because the team had 1) a clear depth of familiarity with West Newbury's history and building stock and 2) availability of two people working on this large project, increasing the likelihood of timely performance. *The Commission voted 4-0-0 to select the Spies and Frontiero team and made arrangements to mail the requisite package to Peter Stott at the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) the following day.*

Ms. Conway also explained that in putting out the Request for Quotes for the Phase 2 Survey, the Commission advertised on our website, on the MHC platform, and via email to all known potential consultants. This good faith effort to disseminate the RFQ was successful in eliciting a satisfactory response. Nonetheless, through inadvertent error, the Commission did not advertise in the local newspaper. Ms. Conway will address this matter with MHC.

Historic District National Register of Historic Places Listing

Ms. Conway said that in discussing with MHC next steps on obtaining National Historic Register listing for the three areas identified in the Historic Sites Survey, she has run into questions concerning the area proposed as "Manufacturers Row" to the east of Elwell Square on Main Street. Apparently MHC has in mind a comb manufacturing area and may think that the geographic boundaries of the area—*i.e.*, lots included—is insufficient.

The Survey describes both combmaking and shoemaking industries in West Newbury and identifies the proposed [Manufacturers Row area](#) as the *homes* where prominent comb *and shoe* manufacturers lived, the area being "notable for its collection of homes associated with the largest manufacturers in West Newbury in the mid-19th century. Shoe manufacturers owned 331, 333, 335, 345, and 347 Main Street. Comb manufacturers in the Chase family owned 319 and 323 Main Street."

Ms. Grammer committed to looking into 1) possible inclusion of additional lots to somehow satisfy MHC and 2) the mismatch between the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission MIMAP's depiction of area boundaries and the area boundaries actually shown in the Survey.

Historic Markers

Ms. Grammer stated that the replacement Quaker Meetinghouse sign has been installed and looks good. She also explained that she prepared 3"x3" QR (quick reference) barcode-like signs that can be stapled onto the post below each historic marker. When a smartphone camera is held up to the QR, it links to the Historical Commission website story about that particular historic site.

Ms. Grammer said that she talked with Building Inspector Glenn Clohec, who enforces the sign laws and he sees no problem with this. She also explained that the QR code can be printed onto paper, laminated, and then stapled onto the post at no cost to the town. *The Commission voted 4-0-0 to approve 1) installation of QRs on the signposts, and 2) after installation a news notice saying that this is now available.*

Julian D. Steele

Ms. Grammer reported that the Community Preservation Committee unanimously approved the proposal for a historic marker for Julian Steele. Interest seems strong in having a cookies-and-lemonade type reception in connection with the unveiling of the sign. Ms. Grammer asked how this could be paid for, the Historical Commission budget already having been used for the Quaker Meetinghouse sign and mailings, with more mailings likely to come. Also, who would be a master/mistress of ceremonies and organize this?

Mr. Janes suggested contacting the Selectmen to inquire about this. He also noted that our current town moderator KC Swallow might be willing to serve as moderator for this event. Ms. Cavanaugh noted that the event may also serve as a means of showing off the by-then newly repainted Town Hall and suggested that perhaps volunteers could help with food. *Ms. Grammer committed to follow up with an email to the Selectmen and Town Manager.*

Quaker Cemetery

Ms. Grammer stated that the assessor's records state that the town owns the Quaker Cemetery, using a default acquisition date of 1900 and offering no deed evidence of a transfer. She researched this in Salem Deeds and found the deed showing the 1855 acquisition of the land for use as a cemetery, and she looked at the wills of the two Quaker trustees who bought the cemetery—and found no evidence of the town's ownership. She also emailed the Amesbury Society of Friends to ask if they own the property and received no response—proving only that this group is not passionately asserting that it does own the cemetery.

She again referenced Massachusetts statutes providing for town management of abandoned cemeteries. The Quaker Cemetery may present a case for the town starting to take action under the statutory framework. *The Commission agreed to think about this and put this item on the next agenda.*

Carr Post

Mr. Janes reported that the meeting about Carr Post went well. Architects provided plans, which Mr. Janes shared with the Commission, which would include restrooms, a lift, and entries compliant

with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The cost is estimated to be about \$500K for the exterior (including removal and rebuilding of the turret) and \$500K for the interior. The primary idea for use of the building is meeting space.

Another meeting has been scheduled for next week.

Minutes

The Commission voted to accept the minutes, as revised, of July 10, 2019 3-0-1, Ms. Grammer, not present, abstaining.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Meeting Documents

Quote responses and materials pertaining to the Phase 2 Historic Sites Survey

Draft Minute History for Julian Steele

Sample QR for historic markers

Carr Post plans

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer