

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, August 12, 2020 Via Remote Participation--GoToMeeting

Members Present Remotely: Chairman Bob Janes; Jennifer Conway; Elisa Grammer via GoToMeeting.

At the outset, Chairman Janes read the following statement: “Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the West Newbury Historical Commission will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible.”

Training Field Sign

Ms. Grammer said that we are waiting for Essex Heritage to drop the sign off to DPW Director Wayne Amaral, who will have the replacement historic district sign installed.

Julian Steele Historic Marker

Ms. Grammer said that the exact spot for the sign has been decided in conjunction with the West Newbury Garden Club. The next step is to determine how to do the virtual fanfare.

The Commission decided on September 3, 2020 as the date for the installation and rollout of a virtual celebration. Ms. Conway will write a press release (noting that 1) the Town unanimously voted for the Steele marker at the November 2019 Town Meeting and 2) with COVID we are unable to have a live event but hope to have one in the future) and the Commission will inform entities with which Julian Steele was involved, including the Boston NAACP, Harvard University, Boston Latin School, etc. Ms. Grammer will let Town Moderator KC Swallow, the Selectmen, and Emilie Steele know that if they would like to have any statements included in the press release, the statements need to be submitted to Ms. Conway by September 21, 2020.

Historic Sites Survey Update

Mr. Janes said that he signed off on the final invoice from our consultants. Ms. Conway said that when the last payment is deposited, she will have the last piece of the grant wrap up documents to submit to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Once the MHC certifies this, the Town will be sent a check for the matching grant.

Next steps after that include 1) putting the hard copy pages into book form to go into the library—a 3 ring binder was used for that last time; 2) putting the survey on the website and doing the email blast & social media to advertise this; 3) writing letters to homeowners with the forms pertaining to their property attached.

The Commission agreed that 1) Ms. Conway will check with the Town clerk to determine if a binder and plastic sleeves are available from the Town to make the book for the library (if not, Ms. Conway has a binder and Ms.

Grammer has plastic sleeves); 2) Ms. Conway will take the CD of this survey and put it on our Dropbox and Ms. Grammer will put the survey on the Town website, with email blast & social media, etc; 3) Ms. Grammer will provide the prior letter to homeowners for editing for the current send out and will reconstruct how the mail merge was done for the last mail out.

Ms. Conway will consult with the MHC about historic districts eligible for National Historic Register listing.

The Commission discussed a third historic sites survey, ideally including properties not visible from the public road and government and other nonresidential buildings such as the 1910 Building, Town Hall, churches, etc. To be on the Spring 2021 Town Warrant, the survey would need to go through the same Community Preservation Committee (CPC) process as before.

The Commission agreed that a third and final survey should be pursued and proposed for the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, via a CPC article. Mr. Janes will determine when a CPC application will be due and Ms. Conway will provide a draft CPC application for the Commission's October meeting.

Election of Officers

By unanimous roll call vote, the Commission members elected Mr. Janes as Chair and Ms. Grammer as clerk and website operator.

Other Business

New member The Commission discussed the need to find a new member. *Mr. Janes will look for a new member and will ask Annie Sterling to develop a website announcement that the Historical Commission seeks a new member.*

Wish list for grants Ms. Grammer suggested that the Commission keep a running wish list of objectives and potential grant funding. Ideas included a book of the Commission's monthly stories about historic markers and notable West Newbury people (and the Cultural Council is a potential funding source); undergrounding the wires at the Training Field; a survey of stone walls and potentially gravestones at remote, hidden cemeteries like the Poor Farm.

Cemetery Maintenance Chair Janes stated his interest in getting the Town to take over cemetery maintenance, which is becoming more difficult in private cemeteries as caretakers age out. He has identified townspeople interested in taking an active role regarding this issue. Ms. Grammer suggested talking with the Selectmen about establishing a structure under state law for Town cemetery maintenance with regard to existing Town-owned cemeteries. The framework could be set up for the Quaker Cemetery and the Poor Farm cemetery at Mill Pond, both Town-owned.

Ms. Grammer will provide bullet points about state law for establishing and funding a cemetery committee and Mr. Janes will work with interested potential committee members.

Also, townspeople John McGrath has been working on the Bridge Street Cemetery, where many of his ancestors are buried. Mr. McGrath offered to let Ms. Grammer look at some records. *The Commission agreed that it would be good if Ms. Grammer could look at the records and ideally photograph them for inclusion in the Commission's electronic records.*

Monthly Minute History Ms. Grammer said that the Minute History for September will be about Hazel Hammond Albertson. She said she will provide a draft shortly and will run it by the Berkenbush family for accuracy.

Minutes

By unanimous roll call vote the Commission approved the minutes of July 8, 2020.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Meeting Documents

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer

DRAFT