

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, March 24, 2021 Via Remote Participation--GoToMeeting

Members Present Remotely: Chairman Bob Janes; Dot Cavanaugh; Elisa Grammer via GoToMeeting. Also present, Eagle Scout candidate Kade Dennis, and his mother Tracy Blais.

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.”

Cemeteries

Almshouse Cemetery

Mr. Dennis reported that he and his father visited the Almshouse Cemetery site. He proposed to gather volunteers to help clean and remove brush, poison ivy, etc., and then carefully rake. He also would restack stones at the stone wall, and replace stones that had been moved to break the wall at the opposite side from Poorhouse Lane. He would also install the new historic marker, which will need a 4” x 4” pressure treated post painted black, like the other historic markers in Town. He added that he had information from the state about conservation of burial markers. Ms. Cavanaugh raised the possibility of markers in the cemetery.

Mr. Dennis also plans to raise funds for supplies, equipment, feeding of volunteers, and so forth. Ms. Blais, who is also the Town Administrator for Newbury, MA, said that she could talk with West Newbury’s Town Manager about donating excess funds to the Historical Commission for continued cemetery upkeep and historical purposes—a concept that the Historical Commission appreciated.

Mr. Dennis noted that he can start work once his Eagle Scout proposal receives approval from the Boy Scouts. Commission Chair Bob Janes said that he has completed the paperwork required of the Commission. *Once Mr. Dennis receives a sign-off from the scouting officials, he will contact Ms. Cavanaugh about scheduling the clean-up work. All Historical Commission members would like to support Mr. Dennis’ efforts.*

Ms. Grammer said that she had begun working on a video about the Almshouse Cemetery. *Mr. Dennis agreed to send her a video of himself in his uniform reading his letter proposing to work on the Almshouse Cemetery as well as photos of himself in his role as a boy scout and a video of descriptions of some of his favorite badges. Mr. Dennis also agreed to narrate a script for the video.*

The Commission considered wording for the new historic marker. In response to Mr. Janes, Ms. Grammer said that we are certain that the Town acquired the Almshouse and Town Farm in 1837

and we know that Abigail Bailey died there in 1837, with no other known gravesite. We do not, however, know when the Town stopped buying paupers in the cemetery. The Annual Town Reports indicate that the Alms house just withered away sometime in the early 1900s. *By unanimous roll call vote, the Commission determined to word the historic marker "The Alms house Cemetery Established c. 1837." Ms. Grammer will place the order for the sign at with the Commission's usual supplier.*

Other Cemeteries

Mr. Janes said that he is coordinating with Commission member Jennifer Conway about his visit to the Ordway family cemetery at 43 Turkey Hill Road.

Historically significant resources

Ms. Grammer noted that the Commission may want to consider whether to add to the list of historically significant resources. Items on the list are eligible for Community Preservation Act funding and also have a cachet of being identified as important to the Town's history.

She noted that in 2006, the Commission officially listed the:

- Training Field, which includes the Town Hall, the G.A.R. Memorial Library, and houses surrounding the Training Field
- 1910 Building
- The Second Congregational Church
- St. Ann's Church
- All Saint's Church and St. John's Hall
- Civil War Memorial, now known as the Charles L. Carr Post

In 2011, the Commission listed the Page School, including the Mill Pond Dam, the Pipestave Hill Apartment Building, and the Pipestave/Mill Pond Recreational areas on both sides of Route 113.

It may be that other resources, such as some Town cemeteries, should be added to the list. *The Commission agreed to consider this further this year.*

Monthly minute histories

By unanimous roll call vote, the Commission approved the draft stories about the Albion Hotel, and the Woman's Clubhouse.

Other business

Mr. Janes said that the Planning Board assistant contacted him to see if the Historical Commission had a recommendation for naming a new road associated with a development at 519 Main Street across from Long Hill Farm. Ms. Cavanaugh observed that the last time the Commission offered such a recommendation, it was ignored and the road was named "Daley Drive." Nonetheless, Mr. Janes recommended naming the new road after Major Isaac Hill Boyd, a lawyer from West

Newbury who enlisted with the 19th Massachusetts and fought in every major Civil War battle from the beginning to the end, dying of combat wounds days before the war ended. Ms. Cavanaugh noted that the Carr Post had originally been named after Major Boyd. *By unanimous roll call vote, the Commission determined to recommend Boyd's name for the new street.*

Minutes

By unanimous roll call vote the Commission approved the minutes of March 5, 2021.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Meeting Documents

--Draft Albion Hotel story

--Draft Woman's Clubhouse story

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer

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