

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:30 pm, September 16, 2021, Via Remote Participation--GoToMeeting

Members Present Remotely: Chairman Bob Janes; Dot Cavanaugh; Jen Conway; Elisa Grammer, via GoToMeeting. Also present, Margaret Hawkins of Main Street; local historian Kristine Malpica; Kelly Scott of Coffin Street.

Historic Markers' Treatment of Native Americans

Margaret Hawkins (who had sent the Commission a [critique of the Ordway marker](#) describing the shooting of an Indian) was joined by Kristine Malpica, a local historian whose graduate work has focused on Indians in this area. They raised concerns about the historic markers' portrayal of Indian issues, and specifically the Ordway sign, which, they said, is or likely is inaccurate. They expressed interest in a more objective and contextual depiction in the historic marker.

The Commission expressed appreciation for their raising this issue and asked for specific recommendations for a course of action. Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Malpica (who said she is also working with Newburyport on this question) suggested revising the Ordway sign and adding another sign in the Indian Hill area of West Newbury, perhaps working with Greenbelt as well.

The Commission made clear that it does not have the expertise or capacity to develop a solution to the problems identified but welcomes a specific proposal. Ms. Conway observed that changes may well need to be run by the Select Board. It was noted that the Historical Commission budget is \$500/year and a new sign costs something under \$200. Additionally, Ms. Grammer suggested that Ms. Hawkins and/or Ms. Malpica are welcome to submit material on this topic for potential posting on the Historical Commission website. *Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Malpica will work to develop a proposal to present to the Commission.*

Gift of 1856 Essex County Map

Kelly Scott made a [slideshow presentation](#) about a 60" x 64" framed map of Essex County, which had been a prized possession of now-deceased long-time West Newbury resident Bob Lovejoy. Ms. Scott proposed to give the map, which has now been restored, to the Town for display.

The Commission, which has the statutory authority to accept such donations, thanked Ms. Scott for the gift and by unanimous vote accepted the gift of the map. It was agreed that Ms. Scott will work on an explanatory card to be hung with the map.

As to a location to display the map, the group proposed the 1910 Building or the new high school. After consideration of the map's fragility and the difficulty the school may have in protecting and preserving it, the Commission settled on the entry level of the 1910 Building, which satisfies the criteria of 1) a prominent location, 2) sufficient visibility to see detail, and 3) a spot where damage to

the map would be unlikely. *It was agreed that the Commission members and Ms. Scott will look at that space and come up with a specific recommendation for the map's location at the next meeting. It was also agreed that an announcement and ideally a newspaper article could publicize the gift.*

Archives, historical materials—digitizing, etc

Ms. Grammer said that she has been in touch with Library Director Corrin Flaherty, who is doing great things and has great plans for Town historical materials. Among other things, Ms. Flaherty is looking into a [grant program sponsored by the Secretary of State](#) that could allow the library and the Historical Commission to use the services of a roving archivist.

Commission members able to go will try to meet with Ms. Flaherty at the 1910 Building basement and at the library next week or the week after.

Election of Chair and Clerk

By unanimous roll call vote, the Commission re-elected Mr. Janes as Chair and Ms. Grammer as Clerk.

Almsouse Cemetery

The Commission authorized Ms. Grammer to add QRs to the post for the Almsouse Cemetery marker. The additional QRs would link to the movie and the story about the cemetery. Also, Ms. Grammer said that she believes that there will be a newspaper article about the cemetery cleanup.

Historic Sites Survey

Ms. Conway reported that the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC's) work still has been delayed by COVID. She is checking regularly to see when the grant requests will be due. Also, she said that she has gotten several recommendation requests concern Stacy Spies, who worked on previous stages of West Newbury's survey.

Monthly stories

Ms. Grammer noted that because of a hectic upcoming schedule, she may not be able to write the monthly stories next year. Ms. Conway offered to help and Ms. Grammer said she could do research. Mr. Janes said he is working on a list of military members from West Newbury who might be the subject of monthly histories. Ms. Grammer will supply Ms. Conway with research on Major Boyd, who potentially could be a candidate for a January 2022 story.

Ms. Grammer noted that additional stories for this year will cover the Central School and the Town Affordable Housing—research for both is complete and both are partially written. Ms. Grammer said that next year, the Commission might consider a hard copy book of the stories.

Other Matters

None.

Minutes

By unanimous roll call vote the Commission approved the minutes of August 17, 2021.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Meeting Documents

Communication from Margaret Hawkins re: Ordway sign

Presentation from Kelly Scott re: 1856 Essex County gift map

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer