

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, July 5, 2022, Town Offices

Members Present: Chairman Bob Janes; Jennifer Munson; Elisa Grammer; Associate Member Dot Cavanaugh.

Commission Reorganization

The Commission voted unanimously to retain Bob Janes as Chair for a three-year term and to appoint Mr. Janes as the Historical Commission representative to the Community Preservation Committee. The Commission also voted unanimously to retain Elisa Grammer as clerk.

Historic Markers

Ms. Grammer reported that the group proposing changes to the historic markers about Indians had sent a request for a status update to the Haverhill sign company.

Ms. Munson, who has extensive experience with signage, identified an extra space (which already had been corrected) and recommended using a comma before the “and” in the lists in both signs (the Oxford comma). *Ms. Grammer agreed to forward this recommendation. Ms. Munson will research the history of the historic markers to, among other things, determine if they were once made of metal.*

Historic Sites Survey Update

Ms. Grammer said that Ms. Conway (who could not be at the meeting because of a conflict) sent an update regarding the Historic Sites Survey. Ms. Conway noted that the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) had minor edits to our Request for Quotes (RFQ) and has sent a list of potential consultants to do the survey work. The RFQ is scheduled for release on July 11, with bids due August 10. Ms. Conway also reached out to Anne Joyce, a Newburyport resident who said her antique house had been moved from West Newbury and sought to have the home included in the West Newbury Historic Sites Survey. Ms. Conway explained that West Newbury’s survey includes only resources located in West Newbury.

Cemeteries

Mr. Janes shared documents describing the services of Robert Perry of [Topgraphics, LLC](#). This ground penetrating radar service was used at the Bridge Street Cemetery to locate and map unmarked graves. The Commission discussed using this service at the [Almshouse Cemetery](#), which has no grave markers and through research the Commission has identified about ten potential burials. The service is not appropriate for the [Quaker Cemetery](#) because of all the trees and brush in the way. The Topographics, LLC materials included a pricing schedule and Ms. Munson recommended obtaining an idea of the cost for work at the Almshouse Cemetery.

The Commission voted unanimously to pursue this for the Almshouse Cemetery. Recognizing that in the end, funding may come from another source, Mr. Janes will contact Mr. Perry for a price range and Mr. Janes will draft the CPC eligibility and funding applications.

With regard to cemetery maintenance, Ms. Grammer noted that she had seen that the Selectboard had the topic of cemeteries on its agenda and asked Selectboard Member Rick Parker about the discussion. He said that the Selectboard discussed maintenance of cemeteries in Town and whether there was space left for new burials. In reply Ms. Grammer recapped the Commission's June 2022 discussion of these matters and asked if the Selectboard had discussed a maintenance schedule for the two Town-owned cemeteries. He said that it would be best if the Commission scheduled a meeting with the Selectboard to discuss that.

Ms. Grammer will check the condition of the Quaker Cemetery and will discuss the issue with the DPW Director. The Commission can raise this issue—as well as the ground-penetrating radar for the Almshouse Cemetery—at a future Selectboard meeting

Town Records & Annual Town Report Digitization Update

Ms. Grammer provided an update, noting that the pre-1881 Annual Town Reports had been scanned and hard copies have been returned to the Town Clerk. Some glitches still need to be fixed in the way that they have been uploaded onto the [library website](#).

The Commission agreed to consider additional items for digitization, and Commission members will continue their work attempting to organize records in the Town Offices basement.

Firefighter & Schools History

No update.

Monthly Minute Histories

Ms. Grammer reported that she has been very busy of late and may need to recycle stories about [General Jacob Bayley](#) and [Brigadier General James Brickett](#), both of whom fought in the Revolutionary War. She has largely completed research about Civil War Major Ben Perley Poore and about Pamela Pearson, who was a pilot in the Canadian Royal Air Force in WWII.

Other Business

Ms. Munson described her work to restore Elm Park in Groveland and discussed her interest in artifacts and preserving historic landscapes and trees. Mr. Janes said that he will be working to gather interested townspeople to find a solution that would save the Carr Post. The Commission discussed the impending redevelopment of Knapp's Nursery and decided to make a project of photographing and collecting information about the property before demolition.

Ms. Cavanaugh, who knows the Marshall family that owns Knapp's will be in contact with them to see if we can get permission to go onto the property and to see if we can copy old photos or historical information.

Minutes

By a 2-0-1 vote the Commission approved the minutes of June 6, 2022, Ms. Munson, not present, abstaining.

Adjournment

9:08 pm

Next Meeting

August 2, 2022

Meeting Documents

Information about Topographics LLC

Ms. Munson's documents concerning Elm Park

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer