

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, November 1, 2022, Town Offices

Members Present: Jennifer Munson, Robert Belmont; Elisa Grammer.

Elmer Burnham Plaque

Ms. Grammer noted that she had received emails from Town resident Tom Flaherty, who provided the Burnham plaque, indicating that installation in the gazebo would be acceptable, then suggesting that the snack stand by the fields would be good, then saying he was ok with the gazebo. Ms. Grammer said that she spent considerable effort polishing the plaque and applying a protective coat and would prefer to have it somewhat out of the weather. Mr. Belmont noted that the plaque would likely be seen more at the gazebo.

Historic Sites Survey Update

Ms. Conway, who was unable to attend the meeting, sent along 1) the report from the consultants for the project's phase one, 2) the latest update of the property list - which is not final, and 3) the latest spreadsheet on the owner's permission list for access to the property. She provided the following update, which the Commission reviewed:

I'm still in need of reaching a few owners, and two have opted out. One is a maybe, depending on the last date they can decide. You'll also note that on the cemeteries there is a resource weight - Wendy did some research at each one to weigh how many each would weigh, based on their size and scope of historical headstones. We've not gotten a firm answer from them as to how many resources will be covered within the budget, but I'm hoping they will all be included.

The next steps for phase two of the project will be to finalize the property list, which is currently in the consultant's hands for review, they will continue taking photographs of the properties. We will receive drafts of inventory forms for different property types within our survey. This phase will be complete by December 23.

I've submitted the first invoice for the project to Wayne, Angus and the Accounting office.

The Commission then discussed potential additions and subtractions to the property list. Ms. Grammer noted that she would recommend removing the Rogers St bridge, which is very old but largely concreted over and has little known history, in addition to a variety of bungalows and later homes that appear to be - built without noticeable distinguishing features. Ms. Munson described the importance of recognizing distinctive architect-designed mid-century structures. She said that her home was designed by an architect who was part of a post WWII school in Cambridge and she has extensive research about this.

The Commission supported inclusion of Ms. Munson's property and Ms. Munson and Ms. Grammer will circulate suggested additions and subtractions

Cemeteries

Almshouse Cemetery

It was noted that Town Meeting approved funds for ground penetrating radar at the Almshouse Cemetery. Ms. Munson said that in her work at Tufts University, she came across an art exhibit that used 5" x 5"

granite blocks. Some of the extras are available for free and these can be used to mark gravesites at the Almshouse Cemetery once they are discovered. Ms. Grammer noted that using granite blocks is consistent with what had been done historically at other poorhouse cemeteries and consistent with the notion that low cost, available stones would have been used. *The Commission unanimously supported this proposal. Ms. Munson will bring blocks here and the Commission will consider how to place the blocks so they do not sink into the ground or become lost in the pine needles and leaves.* Ms. Munson also suggested an event in the spring at the Almshouse Cemetery to mark the discovery of the grave locations and commemorate those interred there.

Town Cemetery maintenance plan

Ms. Grammer noted that the Historical Commission is scheduled to meet with the Select Board on November 7 about an annual twice-a-year program to maintain the Town-owned cemeteries. She noted that we will need about \$150 in connection with an application to the Conservation Commission to do work near the Artichoke Reservoir and that we will need to file an application with that Commission every three years. She suggested putting the application and related documents on the Historical Commission website so that they do not get lost and will persist as Commission membership changes from time to time. *The Commission unanimously approved the powerpoint presentation and the draft Conservation Commission application to be presented to the Select Board.*

Firefighter & Schools History

Ms. Grammer noted that Mr. Janes, who could not be present, has some edits to Mr. Belmont's draft story about West Newbury schools. She said that she found a photo of the old high school in the library and will forward that, along with Mr. Janes' comments, to Mr. Belmont.

Town Hall paint colors

Ms. Munson described two black and white paint scheme options that are consistent with earlier paint jobs for Town Hall and with other similar municipal buildings in New England. The black trim would accent architectural details that are now obscured with plastic shutters and inappropriate large plantings. *The Commission agreed to meet with the Department of Public Works and the Historic District Commission at 1 pm on November 15.*

Monthly Minute Histories

The Commission unanimously approved the draft Minute History about the Stanwoods.

Other Business

Carr Post Mr. Belmont questioned whether the Preservation Guidelines to be included in a request for proposals by potential new owners of Carr Post was sufficiently specific. Ms. Grammer pointed out that in [prior meetings](#) she had shared her comments that included specific references to the construction plans that had been prepared for the Town, and the Commission had not voted for this. Instead, the Commission decided on more general expectations at the [last Commission meeting](#). Mr. Belmont noted that he had recently taken photos of the Carr Post and that the Select Board and any potential buyer should have photos. He also said that the Town should provide the Historical Commission with another draft of the Preservation Guidelines for review.

Ms. Munson suggested that we allow this to move forward. It is possible that a buyer with sound preservation interests and abilities will take on the building.

Draft FY 2022 Annual Report Ms. Grammer said that she had shared with the Commission a draft Annual Report (to be included in the Annual Town Reports) so that this could be finalized at the next meeting. She noted that the Town usually gives committees around 2 weeks' notice that it is due—and then takes a year or so to actually put the Annual Town Report out.

Minutes

By a unanimous vote the Commission approved the minutes of October 11, 2022.

Adjournment

8:39 pm

Next Meeting

Meeting Documents

Draft powerpoint for Select Board

Draft Request for Determination for Conservation Commission

Town Hall color scheme proposal

Draft Historical Commission Annual Report

Historic Sites Survey initial report

Historic Sites Survey property list

Historic Sites Survey spreadsheet for permissions

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer