

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, September 12, 2023, Town Offices, 1st floor

Members Present: Chair Bob Janes, Elisa Grammer, Bob Belmont, Jennifer Munson.

Cemeteries

Mr. Janes said he had told Peter Carbone, who has questions about the private cemetery on his family's property, about this meeting, but Mr. Carbone was unable to attend.

Ms. Grammer said that she would follow up to see about the status of the Quaker Cemetery and the Town's contracting for Town cemetery clean up.

Firefighter & Schools

Mr. Belmont shared his work on schools and firefighting history, including his overview of firefighting in West Newbury describing fire department members, stations, and various of the major fires in Town. Ms. Munson discussed the Great Boston Fire of 1872, which burned almost 60 acres.

Historic Sites Survey

Jennifer Conway had reported that the final phase of the Historic Sites Survey was supposed to have been completed, but has run into delays. The Commission also discussed the problem of the theft of some of the survey pages from the looseleaf notebooks in the Library. Ms. Grammer noted that we may try to have the complete survey bound, which could make it more available if it were in book form and which might discourage theft.

Questionnaire from Select Board

The Commission reviewed a questionnaire from the Select Board that sought information about the organization of the Commission, its recent work, and its goals over different time periods. Working as a group, the Commission developed answers to the questions.

The Commission identified recent accomplishments such as "Nearing completion of 3d installment of Historic Sites Survey; worked with DPW & Historic District Commission on research, planning, design, managing, and painting Town Hall; cleaned up Almshouse Cemetery & had ground penetrating radar analysis of graves; launched annual spring & fall Town-owned Cemetery maintenance; continued with monthly Tales of Our Town; developed program for River Valley school students about West Newbury history at the cemeteries; worked with Town Clerk & Library on digitizing and managing historic documents; worked with concerned citizens to revise historic markers concerning Indigenous Peoples." It reported objectives including "Work with Historic District Commission on potential historic districts; continue cemeteries program; continue work with Town Clerk & Library on digitizing and managing historic documents; continue monthly stories; continue outreach to students about historic West Newbury; ensure preservation of Town-owned buildings and resources; continue support for digitizing and maintaining Town records and archival materials."

By unanimous vote, the Commission authorized Ms. Grammer to send the completed questionnaire back to the Select Board.

Monthly Minute Histories

Ms. Grammer said that she has stories lined up for the rest of 2023 and she plans to apply for a Cultural Council grant to help fund costs of the book of Tales of Our Town

Other Business

Mr. Janes said that he received a letter from Gordon Tatro, who has photos and materials relating to David and John Poore.

Ms. Munson said she has been in touch with DPW Buildings Superintendent Brian Richard, who will be working on the threshold for Town Hall. *Ms. Grammer will send Ms. Munson email information about the Garden Club contact for Town Hall, Linda Schaeffer.*

Minutes

Deferred.

Adjournment

7:52 pm

Meeting Documents

Select Board Questionnaire

10/2022 email about Goodrich Poor cemetery

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer