

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, October 24, 2023 Town Offices First Floor Hearing Room

Members Present: Chairman Bob Janes; Bob Belmont, Elisa Grammer. Also present, West Newbury property owner Peter Carbone.

Cemeteries

Peter Carbone, who with his siblings recently inherited his parents' home including the Goodrich Poore cemetery, said that the family wants to sell the property but find a way to protect the cemetery in the deed. According to Susan Follansbee's book about West Newbury cemeteries, 7 graves are on the site, but only 2 gravestones are visible.

The Commission and Mr. Carbone reviewed the Follansbee entry about the cemetery and discussed the experience with the private Ordway cemetery on Turkey Hill Road, where a deed reservation had not been particularly successful. Ms. Grammer provided Mr. Carbone with the Essex Registry of Deeds references for the Ordway cemetery. Plan Bk 216, Page 72; Bk 3395, Page 520. She noted that even when something is written into the deed, the question of enforcement can arise over the years.

It was noted that the Historical Commission has declared that the Goodrich Poore cemetery is [historically significant](#), meaning that it could be eligible for Community Preservation Act funding. The Commission reviewed MGL ch 114 sec 18, which provides:

§ 18: Care of neglected burial places within limits of town

Section 18. Any town having within its limits an abandoned or neglected burying ground may take charge of the same and keep it in good order, and may appropriate money therefor, but no property rights shall be violated and no body shall be disinterred. No fence, tomb, monument or other structure shall be removed or destroyed, but the same may be repaired or restored.

The Commissioners expressed concern that a number of private cemeteries in Town may be threatened—and this is a growing concern. The question is what is the Town's responsibility. *It was agreed that Mr. Janes will discuss this with the Town Manager.*

Revising “About Our Town” on Town Website

The Commission decided to wait for Ms. Munson's return to discuss this.

Firefighter & Schools

Mr. Belmont reported on his progress in researching and writing up histories of the fire department and the schools. He has been going through past Annual Town Reports and is now working memorable members of the fire department. He has also been working on the schools and is anxious to receive the final Historic Sites survey to aid in the process. Ms. Grammer suggested that Mr. Belmont could also speak with Assistant Clerk Max Close, who is organizing many Town documents and has some concerning the schools.

Monthly Minute Histories & Town Office Stories

Ms. Grammer said that the talented Max Close has begun to produce short pieces about artifacts in Town Offices. The first of these, concerning the [Port Hudson Gavel](#), has been posted on the Historical Commission website. She said that the plan is for next year the Town Clerk Office's stories would alternate with the Historical Commission then bimonthly stories.

Historical Commission FY 23 Annual Report

The Commission decided to wait for Ms. Munson's return to discuss this.

Other Business

Minutes

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of September 12 and October 10.

The Commission deferred action on the minutes of August 1.

Other business

None

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Meeting Documents

- Draft Historical Commission Annual Report
- Proposed Revision to the Town website history

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer

Meeting materials:

- Rewrite of website history of West Newbury
- Draft FY 23 annual report