

## West Newbury

### Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place:** 7:00 pm, November 14, 2023, Town Offices, 1st floor

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

#### **Cemeteries**

Ms. Grammer noted that the Quaker Cemetery has been cleaned up and the bill is with the Town for payment. She said that a few large trees have limbs threatening the gravestones and when working in the cemetery she saw a gravestone that had been shattered by a fallen tree limb. Highway Department director Butch Hills obtained an estimate (\$3,100) for dealing with the trees by climbing and by hand. Ms. Grammer said that she spoke with the Conservation Agent about doing this work (which includes unanticipated removal of a large half dead maple tree) under the existing negative determination of applicability and received an OK. She inquired whether the Commission would support seeking Community Preservation Act funding for this. *The Commission determined to seek Community Preservation Act funding and Bob Janes, the Commission's Community Preservation Committee representative, will work on the applications.*

#### **Revising "About Our Town" on Town Website**

Ms. Munson discussed the research she has done about changing narratives regarding indigenous peoples and how older narratives showing colonialist perspectives become entrenched and perpetuated. She said that the city of Cambridge embarked on project to rename streets with native names and discussed resources at Tufts University. She will be continuing her research into this matter.

*The Commission unanimously agreed to Ms. Munson's recommended revisions to the "About Our Town" story on the Town website. Ms. Munson will work with Rebecca Ambra, the Town Manager's Executive Assistant, to have the revised language posted.*

#### **Firefighter & Schools**

Mr. Belmont provided an overview of his ongoing research and writing about the history of firefighters and the schools. He is now working on memorable fire department members, including Commission Chair Bob Janes. When it is finished, he will give the history to the West Newbury Fire Department. Mr. Belmont said that he is also getting close to the end of his project about the schools.

#### **Monthly Minute Histories & Town Office Stories**

*No update.*

#### **Historical Commission FY 23 Annual Report**

*The Historical Commission approved the draft Annual Report and authorized Ms. Grammer to send it to the Clerk's office.*

#### **Other Business**

Meeting with Select Board: Chair Bob Janes reported that the Commission had a good meeting with the Select Board about the questionnaire that had been recently filled out. He noted that he had asked the Town Manager about private cemeteries in Town and the Town's responsibility for them. The question has been referred to Town counsel.

In response to Mr. Belmont, Mr. Janes said that there was no update about Carr Post. Mr. Janes thought that it could be a good idea to obtain oral histories from veterans in Town. Ms. Grammer said that Assistant Clerk Max Close had raised the idea of oral histories and suggested that Mr. Close be consulted.

Historic Sites Survey It was noted that between the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the consultants, the final phase 3 product had been delayed. Errors in the surveys were discussed. In response to Mr. Belmont, Ms. Grammer noted that we are not in a position to rewrite the consultants' work but have provided supplemental information as necessary.

#### New Member

Mr. Belmont inquired about finding a new member for the Commission, which currently is missing one. Mr. Janes said that Bethany Groff Dorau was approached and was too busy. Ms. Grammer said that she reached out to Historic District Commission members with no success.

#### **Minutes**

*Deferred*

#### **Adjournment**

8:32 pm

#### **Meeting Documents**

- Proposed revision to the About Our Town history on the Town website
- Invoice for Quaker Cemetery cleanup
- Estimate for Quaker Cemetery tree & limb removal
- Draft Historical Commission Annual Report

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer