

West Newbury

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 pm, May 16, 2019, 1910 Building

Members Present: Chairman Bob Janes; Dot Cavanaugh; Jennifer Conway; Paul Knezek; Elisa Grammer.

Public Present: Marlene Switzer, Carr Post Committee

Carr Post

Chairman Janes reported that through his daughter he has engaged with interested townspeople on Facebook's West Newbury New page as regards the future of Carr Post. Annie O'Sullivan and others are interested in pursuing this. On Thursday, May 23, Mr. Janes will lead a public tour of Carr Post and after that a meeting will be held in Town offices to gather ideas for possible uses.

Mr. Janes stressed that he wants people to understand that this will be a costly undertaking and that the facts should be made clear from the outset. He noted that Architect Peter Ringenbach and Engineer Dennis Unger have expressed interest in this as well.

Ms. Switzer reported that Town Manager Angus Jennings mentioned that he knows a person in the consulting company that developed the plan to stabilize the building. He has reached out to her to see if she would give the Carr Post a look and come up with an outline of next steps. He also said it would be a good idea to have a more formal moderated forum for townspeople to consider this. Ms. Grammer suggested a survey like that done by the Cultural Council that might help gauge not only the sentiments of the Carr Post enthusiasts, but also potential opponents.

Mr. Janes concluded, with general agreement, that the key this is to decide upon a purpose—ideally multiple purposes, perhaps including a showcase for Veterans' artifacts, meeting space, etc.

Historic Inventory

Chairman Janes announced that the next step in pursuing the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) grant for the Phase 2 Historic Sites Survey is a MHC meeting at 10 am on May 29th in Boston. He has not heard more from MHC about this. *Mr. Janes will inform MHC that the Town voted unanimously to fund the Phase 2 Survey.*

Ms. Conway will help with this, working on the RFP, using the prior paperwork as a guide. The Commission also discussed giving homeowners the option to allow the historians making the survey into their houses, as a potential means of reducing inaccuracies.

Historic District

Having obtained the Selectmen's approval to pursue listings in the National Register of Historic Places for our three historic areas on Main Street, *Ms. Conway will 1) draft a letter to affected property*

owners explaining this and outline next steps; 2) call MHC about this, and 3) fill out the initial applications. Ms. Grammer offered to help with this, particularly regarding the logistics of a large mailing.

Julian D. Steele

Having obtained the Selectmen's approval of the general idea of a plaque honoring Julian Steele somewhere inside or outside of Old Town Hall, the Commission discussed whether this would be best on the podium, outside or inside. As Selectman Kemper observed, the problem with a location inside the building is that it would not be seen often.

Contingent on advice of Department of Public Works Director Wayne Amaral, *the Commission tentatively decided on a historical marker in front of Old Town Hall* in the same style as the others now in place, with wording along the lines of "At this site in 1952 Julian D. Steele was unanimously elected town moderator, becoming the first African American in the state to hold this position." *Ms. Grammer committed to reach out again to Mr. Amaral.*

Ms. Grammer explained that all the current historical markers were first installed around 1905 by the Town Improvements Society under the direction of Dr. Orin Warren. *The Commission will consider other additional markers, perhaps in honor of the Emery Sisters and at such locations as Ferry Landing.*

Old Town Hall

The Commission generally noted that the Town Hall should perhaps be looked at in terms of structural soundness and things like the safety of the stairs at one of the exits. *Mr. Janes will investigate the status of fire alarms in the building.*

Minutes

The Commission voted 4-0-1 (Mr. Knežek, not present, abstaining) to approve minutes of April 17, 2019, as revised.

Next meeting

July 19, 2019

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Meeting Documents

None

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer