

The West Brookfield Historical Commission met on Monday, October 7, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. in the Commission office in the Town Hall. Attending were Ron Bullock, Jesse Morrison, Louise Garwood, Dan Hamilton, Anne-Marie Nolan, with Dick Rossman presiding.

OLD BUSINESS

Website: The website and the calendar of events are continuously updated as needed. A spelling correction was made to Jesse Morrison's name with apologies.

Treasurer's Report: Anne-Marie provided a verbal report, indicating a delay of a written report as changes in the Town accountant's procedures and accounting numbers have delayed the balance reporting from their office.

In order to comply with new town procedures, a motion was unanimously passed to designate Treasurer Anne-Marie Nolan and Chairman Dick Rossman as authorized signatories for the Commission's town accounts.

H.S. Scholarship: Louise will continue review the language of the scholarship announcement, and qualifications page for next year and submit her revisions to the Commission at the next meeting.

Lucy Stone Nomination: Amy Dugas will continue to work on the nomination revision and address the new requests from MHS, anticipating completion in October.

Old Indian Cemetery: The Fannins report that they have completed Stage 3 of the planned work. Documentation should be completed by the end of the year. An invoice for \$800 has been received on October 7, 2019 for the additional work completed on the repair of the unexpected and newly discovered Seth Eddy headstone.

A motion was unanimously passed to authorize payment of \$800 from the England Fund to the Fannin - Lehner Preservation Consultants per their invoice of October 7, 2019.

Methodist Cemetery: Dan provided an additional land plan dated 1993 which indicated the cemetery property as owned by the Town of West Brookfield with no title deed available. This was added to additional plans and deeds reflecting town ownership, as well as the Town Reports indicating maintenance expenses since the early 1970's.

After discussion, a motion was passed not to pursue an additional title search.

Other options to support documentation of Town ownership were discussed, as lack thereof has been indicated as a stumbling block to the successful placement on the National Register.

A motion was unanimously passed to explore the option and process of obtaining a judgement of adverse possession.

Town Hall Maintenance: We have received a preliminary report from Bob Haveles of Architectural Insights. The report is very thorough with photographs and descriptions and recommendations. It is currently without cost estimates and prioritization. Mr. Haveles was hoping to attend our meeting to supply and discuss those elements but was prevented by a conflicting scheduling commitment. He will send a letter with more information. We will invite him to our next meeting on Monday, November 4,

2019 and hope to continue the process of preparing and submitting this report of needed Town Hall repairs and maintenance.

A motion was passed unanimously to authorize Chairman Dick Rossman to contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding Preservation Restriction and potential funding avenues for preservation of the Town Hall.

Demolition Delay Bylaw: no further developments.

Master Plan Implementation: Dick reported that discussion continued in the Master Plan committee meetings on bylaw language. Louise will arrange for the printing of the poster size map showing the area involved in the Master Plan, as well as the poster size description of the Historical Commission and the current members.

Quaboag Plantation Trail: There has been no further developments or communications from the Brookfield Historical Commission. We remain receptive to the idea and would like to support the efforts. We will drop this topic from our agenda unless it becomes an active program again.

Library Programs: There are no programs scheduled at this time. Discussion was held as to ideas for future programs, including the 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower landing, the existence of Mayflower descendants in our area. Members were asked to research other upcoming historic local anniversaries as possible program subjects.

Cannons within Pine Grove Cemetery: Dan reported that the National Registration for Civil War Artillery is a one-man operation and that one man, Jim Binder, has not been responsive to our email requests for additional information. Jim acknowledged receipt of our cannon detailed photos in May 2019 but no communication since. It does not seem likely that our cannons have a formal registration number, or any documentation associated with the National Registry. We will proceed without that and hold discussion with the Cemetery Commission as to how to best proceed to protect and maintain the cannon. We will invite Mike Seery, the Cemetery Commission Chairman, and the other current Cemetery Commission members to a future Historical Commission meeting to review and discuss the cannon. Mike has agreed to attend and is awaiting our specific date.

Ayers Memorial: discussion will continue as to the responsibility and maintenance for the stone memorial and surrounds.

Fort Gilbert Marker Sign: Dick reported that the sign has not yet been replaced by the MA DOT.

Office Supplies: Dan and Anne-Marie have coordinated an initial order of archival storage materials from Gaylord, as well as a selection of binders for general use. They have arrived. This topic will now be removed from the agenda.

The Boston Post Cane: Dick reported that the symbolic pins representing the cane are in the Commission Office, in the filing cabinet folder for the Cane. This topic will now be removed from the agenda.

Local Historical Memorials and Sites: As per the suggestions from Kermit Eaton of Brookfield Historical Commission, Dick provided a preliminary list of West Brookfield sites, memorials and items to begin our own list and determine ownership and maintenance responsibly. Louise will create a table from this list and distribute it to our commission members to use in gathering information and expanding.

NEW BUSINESS

Foster Homesite Kiosk: Dan reported on the visit to West Brookfield by Jedidiah Foster descendant John Foster of Marblehead and his wife Lila. They visited the Quaboag Historical Museum, to which John had donated Jedidiah's meeting house chair in the 1990s. They had lunch at Ye Old Tavern, and then visited the Jedidiah Foster gravesite in the Old Indian Cemetery and the Homesite on Foster Hill.

The very poor condition of the kiosk at the homesite, as well as the contents displayed therein was likely disturbing to the Fosters, although they did not comment.

In discussion with Amy Dugas, co-president of the Quaboag Historical Society, owners of the homesite property, she offered to contact a contractor to initiate replacement of the kiosk. Members of the Historical Commission have offered to help replace the contents on display.

Meeting adjourned ca. 9:15 p.m. Next meeting Monday, November 4, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. Historical Commission Office, Town Hall. The Public is welcome.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Hamilton, Secretary