

The West Brookfield Historical Commission met on Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. in the Commission office in the Town Hall. Attending were Ron Bullock, Jesse Morrison, Anne-Marie Nolan, Deb Blodgett, Rebekah DeCoursey, Rob Lyon, Dan Hamilton, Dick Rossman presiding. Dan Hamilton agreed to take minutes for this meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan announced his use of a digital recorder to aid in the minute taking process and there were no objections.

Deb announced her recent appointment as Assistant to the Selectmen and her desire to be removed as a voting member of the Historical Commission to avoid conflict of interest. She would like to continue participation in the Commission as an Associate Member.

Rebekah announced her appointment as part of the town government in Ware and plans to continue her involvement with the West Brookfield Historical Commission as an Associate Member when possible.

Rob Lyon announced his interest in joining the Historical Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

Website: Dan reported that the Commission minutes posted on the website will no longer contain financial report details. Those details will be available in minutes delivered directly to the Commission members. He also reported that he will create a binder of minutes to be kept in the Commission Office.

Treasurer's Report: Anne-Marie provided a written report.

H.S. Scholarship: Dan reported that there have been no responses to date through the website or commission email regarding applications for the scholarship. He noted that the contact information in one of the newspapers had inadvertently added a hyphen in the middle of the email address, perhaps contributing to the lack of response by email. The deadline for scholarship application is April 1, 2019.

Lucy Stone Nomination: Dick reported that MHC had returned the nomination papers on February 11, 2019, requesting 30 new additional items of information. He noted that the process has now taken over two years. Amy Dugas will continue to work on the nomination and address the new request.

Old Indian Cemetery: Phase 3 physical work by Fannin-Lehner will resume in the spring. The Fannins reported that the documentation for Phase 3 has been completed.

Methodist Cemetery: Work by Fannin-Lehner will resume in the spring.

Collapsed Structure: Rebekah is working with the Planning Committee and will discuss with them the possibility of the town purchasing the land and developing parking facilities and the Commission's former proposal to use the land as a memorial park for Jedediah Foster and Lucy Stone. Discussion acknowledged the town's announced intention not to purchase the land, the bank's intention to auction off the property, and the Commission's request to be notified as to the date of the auction.

Town Hall Maintenance: After meeting with the Selectmen and learning that the town would not be able to pay for the assessment of the building, Dan called a special meeting of the Historical Commission on February 19th to discuss, vote, and approve payment for the building assessment proposal by Architectural Insights, Inc. in order to meet the deadline of March 8, 2019 for submitting an article for the Town Warrant, Dan attended meetings with the Advisory Committee to establish language and content of the purposed article.

Dan and Dick reported on their most recent meeting with the Advisory Committee and the subsequent decision for the Historical Commission not to apply for a MPPF grant in March of 2020, nor to submit an article to the Warrant for the June town meeting requesting funding for the needed repairs.

We learned that the town already has a Town Hall Maintenance Fund, that it currently held a balance, and they had the ability to transfer funds to it when desired. It was strongly suggested that the Commission did not need to create an article for the Warrant. If the funding was allocated to the grant application process the repairs could not be done as soon as possible, and we felt that to be a priority. The grant work could not be started until the grant is approved which would be beyond June 2020.

Dan and the architect have done a preliminary walk-through of the building and we will continue the process of creating an assessment of the needed building repairs, their cost and priority. When the Assessment is finished, the Commission will provide the Selectmen and the Advisory Committee the information so they may proceed appropriately.

Demolition Delay Bylaw: Rebekah reported that the Demolition Delay Bylaw as drafted by the Historical Commission will be on the Town Warrant for the June Town Meeting. There will be a public hearing on the bylaw held on April 8, 2019 at 7:30 P.M. in the Town Hall. Rebekah and Jesse were thanked for their work on the bylaw. Members were encouraged to attend the hearing.

Master Plan Implementation: Rebekah reported that the Planning Committee was considering using the boundaries of the Historical Village Center District as the boundaries of their Master Plan. She acknowledged ongoing discussion as to the relative historical importance of the current Extension boundaries which incorporate the train depot and tracks area.

Quaboag Plantation Trail: The Commission has been invited to join the Brookfield Historical Commission Meeting on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 6:30 P.M. in the building next to the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield to discuss the trail and the creation of a guide pamphlet.

Library Programs: Rob Lyon was thanked for his informative program on ice skating presented at the library on April 19th. He offered the possibility of several other programs he has done in the past, including one on 19th Century Music and a period version of "Price is Right" where vintage items are used to illustrate the value of money in earlier times. Dan will create a flyer for the May presentation of History at Play and make it available a month prior to performance.

Business Cards: Dan submitted a revised design for a Historical Commission business card. The design was unanimously approved. Dan will proceed to order 500 cards from Vistaprint, the cost being estimated at under \$25.

History on the Road: Dick has again contacted the Principal of the Elementary School and is still waiting for a response.

NEW BUSINESS

Minutes Amended: The Minutes of the Commission Meeting held on February 19, 2019 were amended to reflect the source of the payment to Architectural Insights, Inc. to be the England Fund, as so voted at the meeting.

Asparagus Festival: Dick reported the reservation of a spot in the upcoming Asparagus Festival to be held on Saturday, May 18th. The Commission will offer a table with historical information, maps, books, and local resources.

Financial Motions: A motion was unanimously passed to pay Douglas Sumner the sum of \$300 from the England Fund as payment for the cost of website hosting for the year 2019. A motion was unanimously passed to pay Dan Hamilton the sum of \$20.17 from the Town Account as reimbursement for the payment to GoDaddy.com for website domain name registration for the year 2019.

Membership: The Commission unanimously approved a motion to recommend the Selectmen appoint Rob Lyon to membership on the Commission. Dick will submit the recommendation to the Selectmen's assistant, Deb Blodgett. Dick will also send a letter withdrawing Deb Blodgett from Commission voting membership, per her request.

Cannons within Pine Grove Cemetery: Rob brought to the attention of the Commission the existence of two pre-civil war cannons within the grounds of the Pine Grove Cemetery. He expressed concern about the condition and future security of the historical items. He will use his own contacts and resources to learn more about the best way to protect and preserve them. The Commission encouraged him to do so and will follow up with further discussion.

Meeting adjourned ca. 8:45 P.M. Next meeting Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. Historical Commission Office, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Hamilton, acting Secretary