

The West Brookfield Historical Commission met on Monday, January 6, 2020 in the Commission office in the Town Hall. Attending were Ron Bullock, Dan Hamilton, Anne-Marie Nolan, Louise Garfield, Jesse Morrison, Rob Lyon, with Dick Rossman presiding.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Hall Maintenance: Dick reported receiving email communication from Bob Haveles of Architectural Insights regarding and apologizing for the delay in submitting the final report with cost estimates, recommendations and priorities. He will plan to submit the plan this coming month of January. The Commission proceeded to discuss and prioritize the known issues based on Bob's preliminary and in-person report. The Commission noted that the particularly dangerous front entrance railings had been individually reinforced since the delivery of a letter in November to the Board of Selectmen recommending action be taken to ensure safety.

In keeping with the priority of public safety and code compliance, the Commission listed these items among the many itemized in the report as being of the highest concern:

- a. The front entrance steps and railing – safety issue
- b. Main entrance doors, threshold and framing – safety and security
- c. Inner doors closing in compliance with fire code
- d. Side entrance, bricks and door replacement – to comply with public access code and safety
- e. Repair roof, gutter, and siding water damage – prevent further damage
- f. Indoor stair edging and treads – safety
- g. Spider infestation both inside and outside the building

After receiving the final report, the Commission will review these priorities again considering the cost factor of each. The details of each item are found in the report and will be presented to the Board of Selectmen by Mr. Haveles and the Commission. Hopefully this will occur in March.

Website: The website and the calendar of events are continuously updated as needed. A motion was unanimously passed to transfer the domain name, Internet Service Provider (ISP), and website development from Go Daddy, Green Geeks, and Douglas Sumner to 1&1 Ionos and Dan Hamilton. A letter will be sent from the commission to Douglas Sumner thanking him for his past work and notifying him of these changes. The decision was made in order to reduce the costs of maintaining the website, the ISP, and domain name. The migration will take about a week and will initiate in the month of January. It was noted that any website must be owned and paid for by an individual. Dan Hamilton will be the owner and administrator of record and will be reimbursed by the Commission for any costs incurred.

Treasurer's Report: Anne-Marie submitted a written report reflecting account balances.

H.S. Scholarship: Louise submitted a final version of the 2020 Application which will now be distributed to the to the high schools by January 10th and posted on the commission website. Louise will also send out copies to the press. The deadline for student return of the application is April 13, 2020. The presentation of the scholarship will take place on June 3, 2020 and Dan Hamilton will represent the Commission.

Lucy Stone Nomination: Amy Dugas has completed the revised application and it was mailed on November 14th, 2019. We now await a response from the State.

Old Indian Cemetery: Phase 3 has been completed and phase 4 will commence in the Spring.

Methodist Cemetery: Dan will continue to attempt contact the Boston University School of Theology Research Library where they hold Brookfield Methodist records from 1843-1900. Perhaps we can find a reference to the Ragged Hill Property within the Board of Director minutes. Ron Bullock remarked that he thought it possible there might be written Methodist Church records in the holdings of Quaboag Historical Society. He will check his own inventory notes of the Society's holdings. If indicated, we will arrange to access and review the Museum's holdings.

Demolition Delay Bylaw: no further developments.

Master Plan Implementation: Dick reported that due to poor weather the planned vote on the bylaw did not take place as scheduled. Louise submitted a large printed map of the town with the plan implementation outlined, as well as the Center Historic District and Extension area. When boundaries of each are confirmed, the map will be mounted and protected for display. A digital version will be available for the website.

Library Programs: Following Rob's submission of information, the programs offered by Dennis Picard were reviewed and discussed and several selected as being of interest. Dan will contact him to discuss the cost of each, and possible scheduling. Subjects of interest were Shay's Rebellion, Maple Syrup production, Ice production, spooky tales, early medicine and medical tools.

Local Historical Memorials and Sites: Louise submitted a spreadsheet table created from the starting list submitted last month and will distribute it to our commission members to expand and use in gathering information. Separating Public and Private properties, the categories can be easily expanded and detailed. With the help of Barbara Rossman, a list of hitching posts was found in the office files and distributed to the members. Rob will visit the assessor's office and the current owners of each listed hitching post in hopes of determining the status and ownership of each.

Professional Book Scanning: Dan will invite April Aulick of eWide Technology Solutions, Inc. to the next Commission meeting on February 3rd to discuss the options of scanning books and documents.

History on the Road: As there has been no interest or response from the Elementary School on pursuing the possibility of this OSV program, and a remaining question as to whether it is available, the Commission has decided to drop the project idea.

Meeting with Jon Strauss: Dan has sent the digital photographs from the History of West Brookfield by Jeff Fiske to Jon for his use in developing programing for the cable access station.

Mass Preservation Seminar: Dick suggested arranging a Preservation Plan presentation by Jennifer Doherty, Historic Preservation Planner, a professional consultant on town preservation plans. The Commission had previously reviewed her plan for the town of Framingham.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Report: Dick is preparing an article for the Town Report on the proceedings of the Historical Commission.

A review of the Commission goals for 2019:

1. Continue website updates
 - a. Status: added meeting minutes, slide show, scholarship application
2. Finish phase 3 and begin phase 4 Old Indian Cemetery reconstruction
 - a. Status: Phase 3 report received and paid
3. Assist with Methodist Cemetery Historical Register Nomination preparation
 - a. Status: hours of deed research resulting in inconclusive ownership issue
4. Attend Lucy Stone Birthplace Historical Register Nomination Ceremony
 - a. Status: Nomination was returned and resubmitted with additional material
5. Sponsor Library and Elementary School programs
 - a. Status: 4 programs presented with Library, 10 OSV passes donated to Library
6. Lobby for Town Hall Maintenance
 - a. Status: Funded building assessment by Architectural Insights, waiting for final report
7. Participate in Master Plan Implementation
 - a. Status: assisted in preparation of Village Center Bylaw
8. Present Demolition Delay Bylaw at Town Meeting
 - a. Status: reviewed with Building Inspector and Zoning Officer, now to Planning Board
9. Select Scholarship Recipient
 - a. Status: two recipients selected this past year
10. Works with Brookfield Historical Commission on Quaboag Plantation Trail
 - a. Status: Members met with BHC but their project has not proceeded
11. Work on Rock House Historical Register eligibility.
 - a. Status: tabled due to Lucy Stone Bicentennial Event and Town Hall building assessment
12. Update Historic District Boundary Map
 - a. Status: revised map prepared
13. Redo Shrubbery at Fairfax Marker on Foster Hill
 - a. Status: shrubs removed, this is no longer a Historical Commission asset

A list of goals for 2020

1. Continue website updates
2. Begin final phase old Indian Cemetery conservation
3. Establish Methodist Cemetery ownership
4. Attend Lucy Stone Nomination Ceremony
5. Sponsor Library programs
6. Lobby for Town Hall Maintenance
7. Participate in Master Plan Implementation
8. Complete Demo Delay Bylaw approval

9. Select scholarship recipient
10. Prepare Rock House Historical Register eligibility
11. Prepare inventory Historical Memorials and Sites
12. Work with Local Access on historical programs
13. Consider Historical Preservation Plan
14. Review and Consider a Community Preservation Act
15. Research Hitching Post Ownership

Meeting adjourned ca. 8:45 p.m. Next meeting Monday, February 3, 2020, at 7:00 P.M. Historical Commission Office, Town Hall. The Public is welcome.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Hamilton, Secretary