

Monday, September 11, 2023

September West Brookfield Historical Commission Notes

Louise Garwood, Heather Walker, Jesse Morrison, Mike Sroka, Rachel Gulen,

Agenda

Review Meeting Minutes from June (last) meeting

Review last six month of 2023 Goals

Member Renewals & terms

Secretary position opening

Treasurer position - opening

Treasurer's Report

Action Items:

MPFF Town Hall Maintenance

Demo-Delay presentation progress update

175th town incorporation event planning

Jacob Knight - exhibit of work

Notes

June's meeting notes were accepted by the attendees.

Review of 2023 Goals-

Office Data Management -activities did not progress during the summer; but, will continue. Ann Marie, Heather & Rachel to find a time to meet and discuss a strategy. Also consider whether we want to seek support of volunteers/community service hours

2023 Scholarship activities were completed. Anne- Marie & Louise to pick up 2024 activities at the end of November.

Center Historic District- update sheets & photos is a 2 volume catalog of the houses in the historic district. Former Historical Commission President felt that it would be good to go through and collect the updates from the Accessors Office. Jessie raised goal to seek the updates digitally to save future scanning. The last update was done in 1999; so approaching 25 years. Rg - to try to see what we can collect online using her house. Is this needed for the demo-delay by law? Outside of the historic district, we need list of homes that meet the demo delay by-law. We can download the state information and enhance with our local information in order to make available to the public. Need an update strategy to see if we want to work with MACRIS to update the state record as the last full informational run is now approaching 50 years old. Louise to reach out to her contact at the MA Historical Commission, Jenn, to find out how one makes an edit.

Old Indian Cemetery-there has not been any movement over the summer. Need to reach out and get status of the current body of work and do we want to pick up work of stones not in the original scope that now, 20 years later, may need restoration. \$6k proposed cost for re-assessment of the Old Indian cemetery again. Team discussed

that we have other locations, like the older sections of Pine Grove, that may need attention as well. Put off immediate actions; research putting out RFP for future projects.

Old Methodist Cemetery- Amy Dugas, expressed interest in moving forward with getting the cemetery into the historical register. The issue to moving forward is determining whether or not the fact that the Town of West Brookfield is the common law owner in order to make the submission.

Scenic Road - Wickabog Valley 2023 objective attained. Map and letter for 2024.

Historic Book Club - No time to launch

Rock House - No time to launch work

Demolition-Delay Bylaw will be discussed fully in another agenda topic.

Member Renewals & terms-Each member needs an appointment letter, these will be on voted on at the next meeting of the Selectmen's Meeting. Once appointment is approved, each of us will need to be sworn in. Everyone needs to update their conflict of interest training and open law training. Town Clerk is open 9-12 M-TH
Need tenure staggered so that 1/3 of body expires at a time.

Secretary position opening - Rg offered to take on role for 2023-2024

Treasurer position opening - Heather offered to continue to take on the role for 2023-2024; open question is whether she can also be a co-chair.

Treasurer's Report-Report was read and will be attached to the notes

Heather noted that some numbers are quarterly only and that we have some negative impacts getting updates to the numbers as the Town Account role is only part-time.

- Action Item: MPPF (Mass Preservation Project Fund) Town Hall Maintenance

- Question was raised if money awarded to paint building could be used for general town hall maintenance. We must use the awarded money for what is was intended for, Exterior paint and repairs exclusively. (The Town needs to start a new process for the other items on their list.)
- Louise will need to speak with the Town Administrator and ask that the requests for proposal (RFP) go out as soon as possible for our work to move forward.

• Action Item: Demo-Delay presentation progress update

- Heather and Jesse started on developing the presentation
no current map showing all current towns & cities with a demo delay;
- Rg to test mapping ideas.
- We have been unable to find local grants that apply at a property owner level. In the Cape there is a bit of a coalition of professionals collaborating on preservation and addressing the property owner's needs.
- Proposing buildings older than 100 years which was compromise between ask of 75 and our idea of 125 years old.
- Idea was presented to visit Sturbridge and/or Amherst to see a by-law in action as our Building Inspector is not keen to get involved so we are a bit on our own and need to be buttoned up. West Brookfield averages 1.5 demo requests that meet our potential criteria. Jessie found that the Cape does have a workshop in place as well.

- We want to take ourselves off the Fall 2023 Town Meeting to complete our due diligence for the scrutiny that will come with the introduction of the by-law.
- Can we also collect a list of artisans and professionals are supportive by-laws goals?
- **Action Items:175th town incorporation event planning**
 - Thought about leveraging publicity around White Christmas; but, eventually decided that it would confuse the situation. While carriage tour is a cool idea, the logistics are not ideal to convey the material acceptable.
 - Carriage tour or walking tour during the Asparagus Festival
 - Will need to find a location for the event and plan publicity. Need to contact library to see if they will embrace as an adult program to take place in the town hall in November. Need to find someone skilled with video to preserve the talk. Sunday afternoon would be ideal.
- **Action Items: Jacob Knight - exhibit of work**
 - Venue and map of the space is set
 - April 2024, Ruth Wells Center in Southbridge
 - Heather found 12 photos that will be loaned to us with frames
 - Need to start publicity in January and the location will help with getting the word out.
 - opening reception; do want to invite any notables