Becket Historical Commission
March 2, 2011; 7 p.m.

Present: Rob Gorden, Chairman; Rita Furlong, Treasurer; Barbara Stuhlmann, Recording Secretary; Aaron Beatty, Harry Roff.

Minutes of February 7 meeting read and approved.

1) Mass DOT held a public hearing March 1 at the Town Hall to present their plans to repair and refurbish five bridges on Rt. 20 (Jacob's Ladder Road). Rob and Barbara attended and picked up some literature.

2) We received notices from the ZBA, one having to do with a house in Sherwood Forest. Rob responded that we have no concerns; the other notice described extensive drainage and septic work at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival but as none of the buildings were involved, we had no concerns.

3) Rob received postcards of "Becket after the Flood" from Wayne Love, Dennis, Mass.

4) Letter from Northeast Utilities/Wmeco refering to Mass Broadband 123 Project which will lay 1,000 miles of fiber optic cable through the rural area. Wmeco's job will be to upgrade, or replace electrical transmission lines, pole tops, construction of vehicle/equipment storage and staging access. Rob requested that we should be informed if any work is done within the National Historic Districts.

5) Last year Becket applied for a Community Block Grant which was rejected. This year the town will re-apply and Rob has reiterated our support for the project.

6) At our last meeting discussion centered on the Becket sign in Ballou Park. Since the sign had originally come from the railroad station we talked of having a postcard showing the station somehow afixed to the sign as an identification. Rob found a company in North Adams which does that type of thing and will send us some of their literature. No price quote.

7) At our last meeting, as discussion continued on plaques, Rita suggested having a batch of blank forms made up, which could be filled in later. Question is how many should we have made. Meanwhile Rita had placed an Ad in the Country Journal announcing that as the 250th anniversary of the town is soon upon us, we would like to have all residents in houses over 50 years think about getting a plaque, and to get in touch with us; we could provide them "at cost".

8) Rob reminded us that Mass. Historical Commission has always emphasized that small towns should inventory all their historic houses.

9) Town Pound sign: Rita followed up with Chester SignSmith. They can made a sign of three-quarter MDL plywood, painted, with "Town Pound" and the date on both sides so the sign would hang from an armature perpendicular to the road, attached to the pole that the original was on. Rob found an armature in his barn that could be cleaned up and used. It was moved and seconded to pay $185 for the sign.

10) Rita reported that the Becket Athenaeum wishes to de-acquire all their historic artifacts and documents. Rita attended the Board of Selectman meeting briefly tonight and pointed out that as a Commission we are not allowed to keep this material. We have discussed in the past the desirability of establishing a Historical Society and a Society should certainly be able to keep and maintain all historic items. A good place for storage would be the Mullen House, but it would need to be kept heated in the winter.

Rob suggested that we write a letter to the Board of Selectman telling them of our concerns in this matter.

11) Rob reminded us that we have to get our budget into the town. Rita moved and Aaron seconded that we request $700; Vote was unanimous.

12) Becket Map signs. Aaron reported that the company he has been dealing with no longer makes that particular backing that the maps would be printed on. He'll follow up on this.

13) Rob called for a moment of silence for Constance Mulholland, previous Chairman, who passed away February 17, 2011.

14) While cleaning out church files Rita came upon a trove of 1970's era newspapers and a box of Esther Moulthrop's original notes for the History of Becket Bi-Centennial book. Selecting a newspaper at random offered fascinating glimpses of 1970's Becket - the general store, Donald Feder at the counter, Paul Farmer, Dr. Breit.

Adjourned: 7:50

Respectfully submitted: Barbara Stuhlmann