

Minutes of May 28, 2009

Enfield Heritage Commission

The Enfield Heritage Commission met in the Whitney Hall Conference Room May 28, 2009. Those in attendance were: Marjorie Carr, Mary Ann Hagen, Celie Aufiero, Suzanne Hinman, Meredith Smith, Chair, and Steven Schneider, Town Manager.

The April minutes were read and approved. Meredith Smith was re-elected chairman of the Commission for another year.

Smith reported that she had not heard anything from the historic researchers working on the National Register application and asked Steve Schneider to call them. Marjorie Carr added that they had not contacted her for additional information either. Carr did note that the historical information they had written so far seemed to be quite good. Smith mentioned that the district Enfield was proposing is considered to be exceptionally large for a National Register District.

Steven Schneider, Town Manager gave an extensive report on the progress being made towards the new Shaker Bridge and surrounding roadwork. He showed the Commission, on a large wall map, exactly where the new road would be, once the present bend in the road (by the railroad underpass) is eliminated. Schneider noted that the first work on the bridge should begin in the summer of 2010 with a projected completion date of one year later. The bridge will have sidewalks and be of a similar design to the new bridges in the village. It will be slightly higher than the present bridge but not high enough to accommodate a sailboat passing under it. The old motel site, currently utilized as a non-motorized boat launch area, will be the staging ground for the bridge and road construction. That land belongs to DRED. Following completion of the project, the land will probably be sold at fair market value with the Town of Enfield having right of first refusal.

There was considerable discussion regarding the replacement or removal of the old railroad bridge. One option is to replace the bridge with a much longer bridge to accommodate the Rail Trail and allow for two lanes of traffic to pass underneath. The other option would be to bring the Rail Trail down to grade level and eliminate the bridge altogether. The State is willing to move the abutments to wherever the town wishes. All felt it was important to re-use the old abutments to recreate a sense of what had been there (the old railroad bridge). The consensus of the commission was that replacement of the bridge, using the old bridge abutments (moved to the new location) was preferable to removing the bridge altogether. Smith and Carr will attend the June 1 Selectboard meeting to inform the Selectmen of their preference. Smith noted that old railroad bridges such as the one the State proposes to remove are eligible for the National Register. Mary Ann Hagen suggested a "field trip" to the site in question before any final decision was made.

Mary Ann Hagen reported on activities at the Enfield Shaker Museum. She also mentioned the new exhibit she is working on which will tell the story of Shaker Brother, Henry Cummings. In reference to Shaker history in town, she also mentioned the "midway" which was in the village where many little businesses flourished.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Smith, Chair