

Minutes  
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2015  
Meeting Room  
Great Barrington Fire Station  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

ATTENDING:

- *Members:* Marilyn Bisiewicz, Malcolm Fick, Paul Ivory, Gary Leveille, Bill Nappo, David Rutstein

MINUTES OF JUNE 1, 2015

- On a motion by Gary and second by Marilyn, the June 1, 2015 minutes were approved unanimously
- On a recommendation by Gary, Paul will distribute copies of the minutes to members of the Select Board to provide them with the historical information about the Searles building.

ARCHIVIST CONTRACT AND WORK PROGRAM

- The Commission praised Margaret Cherin's work as highly professional and competent.
- Gary will check with her about her availability and recommendations for work priorities for FY16. When a work program is set, Paul will draft a letter of agreement for signatures.

PLANNING FOR NEWSBOY CONSERVATION

- Dadaelus has scheduled the Newsboy as their first project, Spring 2016 with a completion date of "prior to July 31, 2016." They have sent Paul part of the standard contract for their work. Paul has requested the remaining pages containing the Scope of Work.
- Paul has reviewed requirements in the CPA contract and prepared an updated Timeline that includes project tasks and schedule of completion dates. The requirements to:
  - Design and fabricate a project site sign has already been done by Chris Rembold.
  - Prepare an accessibility plan was answered in a meeting with Chris Rembold and Joe Sokol this week. The determination was made that there is available and existing parking between signs Malcolm pointed out that Newsboy Monument Lane has "No Parking" signs on both sides. Since there is no space between signs, at least one of the signs should probably be removed. Malcolm also disagreed with the meeting's conclusion that there is access to the monument from the sidewalk on the opposite side of Route 23 as the traffic is too fast to make crossing the road totally safe. The removal of signs makes accessibility automatic.
  - Write and print a brochure will be done by Gary who is already an authority on the statue and who will make use of the research conducted during preparation of the grant application.
  - Hold a celebratory opening: Bill will help organize and talk to Debbie Oppermann about jointly sponsoring the event.
  - Conduct training sessions for annual inspection and waxing of the statue will be organized by the Commission and include its members, the DPW staff, volunteers. Pump maintenance needs to be a part of the training and the maintenance manual. Too, it's important to include maintenance funds in each FY Historical Commission budget.
  - Install fencing around the scaffolding. Bill will meet with Paul and Dadaelus to organize and coordinate.
- Juniper Bushes: Gary recommended removal of the Juniper bushes. They are overgrown, hold moisture which is deleterious to the dolomite and need to be cleared out of the way for the scaffolding.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

- Paul is writing grants to the CDC and MHC to fund the first phase of an update of an Historic Resources Survey for the town. The total budget is \$36,615 with two \$15,000 requests to CDC and MHC and \$6,615 in in-kind labor by the Historical Commission and other volunteers.

- For Phase 1, Paul estimated the completion of forms for 40-50 new sites and updating 100 sites from the 1985 survey (which includes 463 sites). Gary pointed out the early Dutch style 18th century house just west of the Route 41 underpass as a candidate for a new form.
- Paul noted that if we are not awarded the MHC grant, some of the work can still be accomplished with CPA funds alone because architectural historian firms usually charge a "piece-work" rate. Bill stressed that this consideration be included in the CPA application.

#### FY16 BUDGET AND WORKPLAN

- The Commission reviewed Paul's September 10, 2015 edition of the "FY16 Budget and Work Plan," with comments on the various projects.
  - The documentation and salvage for the Main St. Reconstruction Project will run through the fall and into next spring
  - While the Historical Commission budget can pay for a consultant to evaluate the environmental conditions on the second floor of the Ramsdell Library and make recommendations for stabilizing the temperature and relative humidity, a CPA grant is recommended to fund its implementation. In the CPA application, it's important to stress that this is a project that supports archival preservation. It was also recommended that this be a joint project with the library to reinforce the archival aspect. Bill felt that the project would be fitting for the CPA as the town looks to this program as a source of funding for capital projects. The archivist will continue to record readings as a part of her work plan.
  - The \$995 license fee for the walking tour app has already been spent in July 2015 (an FY16 payment)
  - Malcolm stated that it was too late to lay the groundwork for a demolition delay bylaw article on the Town Meeting warrant. He recommended starting meetings with the Planning Board for the 2017 Town Meeting.
  - The Town Manager has agreed to forward the Form B for the Housatonic School to the Massachusetts Historical Commission with a request to declare eligibility for listing on the National Register. Paul will prepare the cover letter for transmittal of the material.

#### EMPIRE TELECOM

- As part of a Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Empire Telecom has written the Commission asking for its comment on its installation on Fairview Hospital, 29 Lewis Ave. The Commission reviewed their specifications and determined that the project will not adversely impact the building's historicity. Paul will respond with this finding.

#### LINKS WITH TOWN FACEBOOK PAGE

- Bill has met with Karen Smith about Commission representation on the town website. She asked Bill to submit historical photographs for inclusion.

#### CITIZENS' SPEAK

- No participants

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- Community Preservation Committee: Bill reported that there were 16 applicants for the FY17 grant round requesting a total of \$1.7 million. There is only \$800,000 available to disburse. The total request for historic preservation projects is \$314,000. Applicants include: the Unitarian Church in Housatonic, the Fairgrounds, Historical Society, Historical Commission and St. James Place.
- Walking Tour:
  - Marilyn reported that she and Malcolm added children's activities at the River Walk that featured a mason jar full of wooden nickels. She sadly noted that the jar has been twice stolen necessitating its permanent removal.

- Malcolm reported that the walking tour app has been significantly updated. It now works on I-pads. The images feature a higher resolution. "It's much nicer." The brochure supply is totally depleted and he will order reprints in the spring. He also plans to add two photographs from the New York Public Library: W.E.B. Dubois alone and his Great Barrington High School graduating class; Gary noted that our archives includes a copy of the latter which Malsolm can insert into the text; he will forward the names of the class members to Malcolm for the caption. Gary will check on the existence of the former and if it is not in the archives, Malcolm will request permission for its use from the NY Public Library.
- Coach Alphonso Plaque: Gary reported that the bronze tablet honoring Coach Alphonso from the Searles auditorium/gym had been given to his daughter, Phyllis Kinne. Phyllis would turn the plaque over to the town in response to an appropriate use for it.
- Searles Blackboard: David reported that a blackboard bearing an inscription referencing the last day of school will be saved. Bill and David Carpenter toured the school to note key architectural features that need to be preserved. These actions weren't done on behalf of the Historical Commission.
- Bylaw Interpretation: Malcolm felt that the Searles developer intends to interpret the bylaw as referring to the site and not specifically the building. In discussion, all members felt that the purpose, intent and spirit of the bylaw was to preserve old buildings and could not fathom how it could be interpreted as a legal justification for demolition.
- Town Hall Clean-Up: Paul reported that signs posted about the Town Hall state that it will be closed on September 23 for a "clean-up." He will check with the Town Manager about details of the project and if the Commission needs to deploy members to ensure historically valuable material will not be jettisoned.

#### NEXT MEETING

- Monday November 9, 2015 [Note: recently changed to November 16 at 7pm]

#### ADJOURN

- Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously.



