

Minutes
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission
August 6, 2012
Great Barrington Fire Station (Conference Room 6)

ATTENDING: Marilyn Bisciewicz, Malcolm Fick, Don Howe, Paul Ivory, David Rutstein.

MINUTES OF June 4, 2012:

- The minutes were accepted unanimously with the following re-write of the paragraph about the Searles High School Article by David Rutstein (p. 3):

David prepared an article in *Grapevine* about a bookcase moved from the old Great Barrington High School to the new Searles High School, when that facility was constructed. The bookcase bore a plaque commemorating Ida Roraback, a beloved teacher who also taught W.E.B. Dubois. When Searles Middle School closed, the plaque was rescued by the Historical Society and deposited in its collection.

HERITAGE AREA WALKING TOUR APP GRANT PROJECT

- Promotion
 - *Informational Brochure*: Malcolm reported that 750 full color brochures promoting the app tour have been printed and distributed to such spots as the tourist kiosk fronting the Masonic Hall on Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce booth. He will also deliver to local B&Bs. Paul will deliver a stack to the Red Lion Inn.
 - *Print Media*: Paul will ask Dan at Housatonic Heritage about any possible contacts with the *New York Times*. Community Calendar columns in regional print media, such as *Berkshires Week*, need to receive releases about the tour. In addition, a display ad in the *Shoppers' Guide* over Columbus Day weekend would be appropriate; Malcolm will check the cost.
 - *Electronic Media*: pending budget an underwriting promotion on WAMC would be productive.
- Downloads: To date there have been 143 downloads which includes both domestic and international (China and Bolivia) audiences.
- Project Budget: there is \$251.00 remaining in the project budget which will be dedicated to funding promotion of the tour. David reported that marketing for his walking tours is set and doesn't require additional monies.
- Next Steps: Create Additional Tours: the list of possible topics for future tours, such as the Taconic-West Avenues Historic District, or an app version of David's walking tour, is almost limitless. The Commission will develop a roster of potential topics at its October meeting and discuss the possibility creating a new tour over the winter. Malcolm pointed out that there are no additional costs for the permits, licenses and connections as these are already paid for from the grant. He also suggested securing donations or payments (in the \$50 range) from local merchants for inclusion on the tour. The Commission would have to determine if such a plan would conflict with the Chamber of Commerce website.

COLLECTIONS

- Cataloguing Mahaney Gift: Ruth Baldwin Collection:
 - *Assessment of Collection:* Paul has opened the shipping box and made an initial assessment of the collection. It is a sizable gift with hundreds of pieces sent.
 - *Next Steps:* prepare an inventory, Deed of Gift and thank you letter. The challenge is to accession the collection so that the method jibes with the Historical Society's software. This will facilitate the transfer process.
 - *Accession/Inventory:* Paul divided the objects into four groups: objects, photographs, library materials and manuscripts. He has prepared directions and will distribute one group each to the four commission members who are volunteering to complete the inventory (Malcolm, Marilyn, Gary, David). They will assign (and mark) an accession number on each object and enter a brief description on an Excel inventory form prepared by Malcolm. They will also segregate and not inventory any item that is not germane to Great Barrington history. A training session and distribution of the objects and archival supplies will be held at Paul's house on August 22 at 3:30.
 - *Trunk:* the Mahaneys have offered Amos Baldwin's trunk that he shipped back and forth from Great Barrington to California. It is "big" and his initials are marked on the exterior. The Commission agreed to accept their offer.
- New England Log Homes Sign: Paul will retrieve the sign from the CDC office and deliver it to the Wheeler House where the Historical Society has generously agreed to store it.
- Archival Supplies: Gary has picked up the supplies that were ordered under the FY12 budget.
- Ledgers:
- Episcopal Bell: The Commission has authorized the loan of the Episcopal Bell (bronze, 1766), part of its museum collection, to the Historical Society for transport (under Gary's care) to Ingersoll, Ontario on August 10, 2012 as a part of the Society's joint program with the Oxford Historical Society to better understand 18th century connections between Great Barrington and Ingersoll.

MAIN/RAILROAD STREETS RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT: HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION STREETLIGHT MEETING ON AUGUST 16

- The Commission has completed extensive research of the period appearance and progression of styles of the streetlights in the Main Street business district. The results have been summarized in a letter to the Selectmen and Historic District Commission. The Commission recommended the installation of the Williamsville model. Of the styles offered by National Grid, this most closely replicates the appearance of a light that was actually used (early to mid-20th century) in town. It was emphasized that there were no streetlights designed by William Stanley.

FY13 BUDGET

- The Commission was allocated the traditional \$650 in the FY13 budget. Although more money was requested (\$4,456.00), our timely electronic submission failed to be delivered to the Town Manager and treasurer. In future years, we will submit the budget by hand-delivering hard and via e-mail and double check receipt.

- There are no required expenditures to sustain the walking tour app. However, payments will need to be made from the FY14 budget.
- The bulk of the FY13 budget will be dedicated to the purchase of archival supplies.

LOGO FOR THE COMMISSION

- A good Commission logo would be a significant marketing and branding tool. The logo design must be a distinctive and compelling symbol of the Commission's mission, readily identifiable and easy to reproduce and readily recognizable on everything from letterheads and brochures to pins, mugs and certificates, etc.
- Bill Nappo has sketched some conceptual design ideas (included in handouts).
- Jim Mercer, Chairman of the GBHDC, has suggested the universal use of the cenotaph, the GBHS logo, as a part of the logos of all historical groups in town to project a united effort.
- We will request Bill to create a conceptual logo image that includes the cenotaph to add to the options
- Discussion was tabled until the next meeting and, if needed, with the HDC and HS.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

- Passage of this act at the November election is critical to the provision of matching funds for the long list of historic preservation and museum projects for the HC, as well as the HDC and the HS. It is important that Commission members talk in support of this measure to all acquaintances.

PROPOSAL FOR INTERNSHIPS TO WORK ON UPDATING HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY

- Don suggested the development of an intern program to help undertake initial phases of updating the dated historic sites inventory. Students/volunteers could complete oral histories with current owners, recording their personal knowledge of their property. He thought the initial focus should be on the West Ave.-Taconic Historic District.
- Ultimately, a formal historic sites survey needs to be completed by a professional architectural historian. The most promising way to pay for this project would be through matching grants from MHC and the CPA (pending approval by the town).

HISTORICAL COMMISSION E-MAIL ADDRESS

- Bill has created an e-mail address for the Commission (gbhistoriccom@gmail.com) as the first step in creating a blog and web site.

MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT: TRAFFIC LIGHTS

- Don reported that concerns about the unsympathetic design of the new traffic lights scheduled to be installed as part of the Main Street Reconstruction Project have been raised to the GBHDC. Craig Okerstrom-Lang's Design Review Committee has a purview over this issue but the committee is advisory and has no official decision-making authority.
- The HDC prefers the use of the older style traffic lights, those that replicate the existing installation.

RISING POND DAM REPAIRS

- In response to a letter from the Department of the Army, New England District Corps of Engineers, the Commission concurred with the Massachusetts Historical Commission's determination of "no adverse effect" of repairs to the Rising Pond Dam, cited in the letter.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- Monday, October 1, 2012, 7:00pm at a site to be determined.

ADJOURN

- Motion to adjourn unanimously approved.