

Minutes
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission
June 4, 2012
Great Barrington Fire Station (Conference Room 6)

ATTENDING: Marilyn Bisciewicz, Malcolm Fick, Don Howe, Paul Ivory, Gary Leveille, Bill Nappo, David Rutstein. Great Barrington Historic District Commission: Jim Mercer, Craig Okerstrom-Lang, Barbara Syer.

MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2012: membership will read at home and submit any comments by Wednesday, June 6.

WELCOME TO HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION: Paul welcomed members of the HDC and thanked the committee for their good work in preserving the town's historic resources.

HERITAGE AREA GRANT PROJECT

- Project Status Update: Malcolm reported that on June 5 Gary and his daughter will record the audio narrative at the WSBS studios which is donating the use of their equipment. The next steps include: submission of the app to the vendor for review of download capacity, size of photos, etc. and to Apple to ensure it conforms with their standards as an app.
- Marketing the Roll-Out:
 - *Budget*: grant funding is underspent and Malcolm estimates that \$511 can be dedicated to publicity and promotion. The money needs to be spent before June 15.
 - *Promotion Ideas*
 - ✓ Notify S. Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitors Bureau and other tourism outlets about the release of the app and to insert links on their websites.
 - ✓ E-mail press release and contact Trevor Jones at the Eagle and David Scribner at the Record about the roll-out.
 - ✓ Insert link on Town of Great Barrington website
 - ✓ Quick print one-page flier for distribution at the Chamber booth and in Town Hall
 - ✓ Create Facebook page. Bill's son Willy could do this for us. Joy Irons at the SBCoFC is also a virtuoso with this site and twitter.
 - ✓ Print eye-catching sticker to apply to the front of the Historical Society walking tour booklets for public distribution.
 - *Sub-Committee Meet*: Malcolm will meet with Paul and Bill on Wednesday to a final promotion plan, a budget and schedule.

HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGNAGE

- Jim Mercer reported that the Historic District Commission is launching a project to design and fabricate signs and markers for the Taconic-St. James Historic District and downtown sites. The signs would be installed at entries to the area. Markers (approx. 10" x 7" plaques) would be purchased from the District Commission or Historical Society by owners of individual sites.
- Paul Ivory recommended the installation of an introductory interpretive panel which, through a map, text and period photos, would present the historical context and significance of the district.

- Graphic design standards need to be developed so that this and other sign projects present uniform colors, fonts, sizes and overall look.
- The Historical Commission recognized the importance of the initiative as a highly visible means to heighten public awareness of these historical assets and unanimously voted to endorse the project. It offered its assistance in any way.
- David Rutstein recommended the installation of a sign or marker on the town hall grounds (perhaps on the replacement first resistance stone) describing the Mumbet story and commemorating its role in MA becoming the first state to abolish slavery. David will prepare a proposal and draft text for submission to the District Commission

COLLECTIONS

- Mahaney Gift: the gift of Great Barrington-related material from the estate of former resident Ruth Baldwin, of Santa Cruz, CA, has been received.
 - Because the final methodology for accessioning and cataloguing the Historical Commission museum collection, to include compatibility with the Historical Society's system, has not been formalized and the uncertainty of the accession number sequence, the collection will be inventoried on a spreadsheet. Paul will review the column titles with Malcolm, prepare a template and distribute, as close as possible, by category to David, Marilyn and Gary who will make entries for their assigned pieces. Gary will also confer with the Society's contract archivist.
- New England Log Homes Sign: the sign has been given to the GBHC by the CDC and is in storage in their office. Jim Mercer granted permission to store the sign at the Wheeler House if it is too big for the Ramsdell storage area.
- Archival Supplies: the HC has until June 30 to spend its budget of \$650.00. Paul will confer with Malcolm about the order list and travel with Gary to University Products, Holyoke next week for the pick-up. He has a purchase order from the town treasurer and will call University Products first to make sure it will be accepted.
- Montgomery Glass Plate Negative Gift: Michael Montgomery, formerly of Grove St., donated ## 5x7 and 1 8x10 glass plate negatives to the Commission through Paul in December 1996. Although Paul placed them in a safe place in his house, they were forgotten until he recently recovered them. The negatives were rescued by Michael's father, Burt, when they were discarded from Gil Harmon's store on Bridge St. Gary will make prints of the negatives before they are catalogued.

RAMSDELL LIBRARY NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

- The library has hired Noreen Roberts, Goshen, MA, to prepare the National Register nomination. This was revealed when she called Gary with research questions. It's important that the Commission be kept informed about such pertinent projects. Paul has spoken with Jim Stark of the library board about this.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

- Paul thanked Bill Nappo for speaking in support of the act at the town meeting. Paul also represented the Commission in endorsing the act at the meeting.
- It's important for the Commission to continue to actively support passage of the act at the November elections where it is on the ballot. It provides funds for most all of the projects the Commission undertakes.

STREETLIGHTS IN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

- The town must submit its plans for the Main St. reconstruction project to the Historic District Commission for approval. The core concern is the reproduction streetlights that will be installed at crosswalks. National Grid, who will install and maintain the streetlights, has offered a limited selection from which the town will choose.
- The Commission will continue to present the historical background of the streetlights, recommend fitting reproduction designs and support the Historic District Commission.

KNOX TRAIL ARTICLE

- Gary served as host and tour guide for two writers from *American Revolution* magazine who were walking the Knox Trail from Fort Ticonderoga to Cambridge.

SEARLES HIGH SCHOOL ARTICLE BY DAVID RUTSTEIN

- 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.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRIP TO CANADA

- The Historical Society is sponsoring a group trip (August 10-12) to Ingersoll, Ontario and the Oxford Historical Society as a reciprocal gesture for their visit to Great Barrington earlier in the year.

NEXT MEETING

- Monday August 6, 7:00 pm

ADJOURN

- Motion to adjourn unanimously approved.

