

Downtown Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 15, 2015

Town Hall, 334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Members present:

Don Howe, Chair
Holly Troiano, Secretary
James Mercer
Dan Bailley
Barbara Syer
Pat Ryan, alternate

Call to order at 6:36pm by Chairman Howe

- Minutes of the November meeting will be provided at the next meeting.
- Noted, Phil Ghi did not come to the meeting again despite being specifically invited
- Chair Howe: Design advisory will give us official note of any actions they may take
- Marker update: Jim Mercer showed the samples of the final product and noted that the price for the first 3 is \$731(bronze) due to the making of the pattern. After that the price is \$45 each for markers made of composite and when ordered in lots of 5 or more, \$35 each. The cost for bronze markers will be \$180 each. These markers will be available to any building owner in town.
- Chairman Howe asked for a motion to approve the \$731 bill for the first 3 markers. Dan Bailley offered the motion and Jim Mercer seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Markers will be made available after the dedication of the first three.
- Jim Mercer identified www.macris.com as a resource for locating historic buildings in any U.S. town.
- Sharon Gregory suggested the markers be made available before the historic house tour on May 2nd.
- Chair Howe asked if the applications could be ready in time.
- Paul Ivory said yes and Pat Ryan agreed. All in attendance agreed it would be a good idea.
- Chair Howe noted that updating the historic building list is in progress
- Chair Howe recalled the Resistance marker had been hit in 2008/2009 and a chunk had come off the top. Town workmen stuck it back with mortar and the wording was lost. It was noted that the marker was a replica.
- Paul Ivory recommended that Williamstown Restoration look at it and let insurance pay.
- Chair Howe asked if the concrete benches that had been in front of Town Hall were being replaced. Paul Ivory did not know.

- Chair Howe informed the meeting that Marilyn Bizewitz has a time capsule from Bryant School in a small, child's casket circa 1980. He suggested burying it at the marker dedication, burying it near the WWI monument with a marker.
- Paul Ivory said that it would be costly and labor intensive.
- Dan Bailey suggested that Richie Atwood could possibly use his grave digging equipment to help us.
- Paul Ivory said yes to that but the Historic Commission is too busy to do it.
- It was decided to ask for the same budget as last year.
- Form B updates for a survey of historic properties were discussed.
- Chair Howe proposed to do the buildings in our district and those that overlap with the Taconic West district and that it should be professionally done.
- Paul Ivory said the Historic Commission sent a proposal to the Town Manager to do one for the Housatonic School. If we can get moving soon we can combine so the Town Manager would view it as more worthwhile doing 2 instead of 1.
- Chair Howe said he was investigating getting the Great Barrington town government certified.
- Paul Ivory said he was trying to get the Housatonic School eligible with Mass Historical so we could apply to have designated an historical site.
- Chair Howe mentioned a possible survey and planning grant application from Mass Historical and that a certified local government would help.
- Chair Howe noted that the graffiti in the tunnel is changing frequently. We were promised that washable paints would be used. Paul Ivory said he would check it out.
- Chair Howe mentioned that there may be an old cemetery near the old admission booth at the fairgrounds. It is possible that it may be a slave or Indian burial ground that extends under the highway. Also the southwest corner of the Mahaiwe cemetery is designated historical and has low drainage.
- Sharon Gregory suggested a "place making" idea for Great Barrington. A kiosk-type display to show what is going on in Great Barrington that would be accessible even when Town Hall was closed. She also suggested offering coffee at the houses on the house tour. Another suggestion was to declare a Great Barrington History Day/weekend. Can we ask selectboard for May 2 to be G.B. History Day. Perhaps ask high school students to do walking tours. Also ask local restaurants to sell History Day boxed lunches for those walking around town. The Art show did well and this could too. The consensus was it was a good idea.
- Jim Mercer suggested that the H.D.C. should do the kiosk.
- Chair Howe noted that the H.C. has purview over the entire downtown and Sharon should take it to them.

- Jim Mercer noted that Bobby Wheeler died this week and the H.D.C. should send a letter to her family noting her service to the town. Chair Howe agreed.
- Motion to adjourn by Dan Bailey, seconded by Barbara Syer. Approved unanimously at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly M. Troiano
Secretary
Historic District Commission

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