

## Minutes of the Harvard Historical Commission

Tuesday February 3 2009

Members present: C. Cutler, D. Coots, J. Feist, L. Horowitz, J. Martin, R. Saalfield, R. Sprague

Members absent: S. Frechette, R. Minar

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The meeting came to order at 7:36 pm

Robert Adam, a consultant working on the restoration of the Houghton House (on West Bare Hill Road), is preparing an engineering structures reports on the house. Adam is skeptical of the official date of the house, 1671, however he feels the earliest part of the house may be as old as 1710.

All but about 500 feet of the east ell are within a wetland so Adam, as General Contractor on the project, is filing a notice of intent with the Conservation Commission prior to beginning work on the house. There is an old well on the property which probably dates from the first half of the 18th century (about 15 feet deep). The Board of Health requires the property owner to abandon an old well if she is installing a new well.

Dan Wolfe, of David Ross Associates, is the engineer working on this project. Adam and the owner would like to preserve the well as a historic artifact. They propose to place a lockable cover on the well; fill it with sand; remove piping to the well; construct a historic replica of an entry porch that will cover the well. The area around the porch will be re-graded away from the well to prohibit surface runoff from entering the well. (They are even willing to put a deed restriction on the well.)

Adam is requesting the presence of one or more members of the HHC to the Board of Health meeting scheduled for Tues, Feb 10, 7:20 pm. Rudy Minar and John Martin have said they will attend the meeting.

Adam is going to share with us a copy of the Shirley Historic Commission design guidelines and timelines.

For discussion:

**Bromfield Science Fair:** J. Feist has formed a coalition of the HHC, the Historical Society and Fruitlands Museums who will together give an award to a Science Fair Project. We have access to a fund, the Historical Commission Gift Fund, amounting to approximately \$500.00. We can draw from this for our portion of the award. Members agreed to each contribute \$7.00 to total \$50.

We need to establish criteria for our award in the hope that in years to come some students will design and research their projects with an eye toward areas of research and experimentation that inform the historical and preservation of processes with which the HHC is broadly involved. John Martin suggested : 'preference will be given to those projects that apply scientific disciplines such as archeology, geology, building sciences and engineering to the human history or natural history of the town of Harvard and its environs.'

**Revised Application for Design Review:** D. Coots agreed to review and edit J. Feist's draft of the new document based on Coots desire to incorporate in this document more of the tone of the new design guidelines.

**Debrief on meeting with Chris Skelly,** state rep to historic commissions: Skelly urged caution and patience in regards to the establishment of a Still River Historic District (a timeline of 7 years would not be unreasonable); he urged us to think of ways in which we could partner with the schools to increase understanding of Harvard history. R. Sprague will talk to her daughter-in-law who teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade language arts in Bolton what procedure we might follow to institute such a curriculum project here.

**Update on our application for historic district signage:** Feist, referencing the current depressed economic climate, suggested we consider removing our application for CPC funding for signage or scaling the project back substantially. He suggested perhaps placing only one sign on the Common as a public relations gesture. C. Cutler, our representative to the CPC, urged us to leave our application active as the town's financial picture will only be worse in a year. A motion was made and approved to leave in force our application for CPC funding for historic district signs.

**Update on restoration of the Shaker Cemetery:** S. Frechette reported, through J. Feist, that consultants she worked with recommend approximately 8k be spent evaluating the scope and specifications of the job. She feels the Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake might be persuaded to donate some funding for the study.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Roseanne Saalfield*