

February 8, 2011

Harvard Historic Commission – Minutes

Members present: C. Cutler, J. Feist (Chair), J. Martin, R. Minar, R. Saalfield, R. Sprague, K. Swanton, J. Wollaston

Members absent: D. Coots

Meeting called to order: 7: 30 p.m.

- Minutes of January 4 2011 meeting approved unanimously.
- Minutes of January 19 2011 meeting approved unanimously.
- Feist reported that he and Rudy Minar, as HHC **Science Fair** judges, decided that there were no projects suitable for a HHC prize. (There were no projects at all addressing our mission.) More discussion needed before next year's fair: do we give up on the idea of promoting serious research among high school students or do we do a more thorough job of explaining and promoting topics of interest to us. Saalfield suggested that our decision regarding our future participation needs to be made no later than August.
- The application by **Jennifer and Chris Candon** (25 Oak Hill Road) was considered. J. Candon attended the meeting and commented that a change might be made to one feature of the design (a rectangular window in the gable over the garage doors rather than an arched window). A roll call vote to approve the public session addressing this issue was called. No member of the public had a comment to make and the public section of the meeting was closed. Cutler and Wollaston approved of the installation of either an arched or rectangular window in the gable; Feist requests that clarification be presented by the owner (to designee Jared Wollaston) once she has determined exactly which style of window she wants to use. Motion to approve this application was unanimously approved.
- Members discussed the topic of leadership succession and possible resignations among members. (Feist's term and the term of the two alternates are the only ones terminating this spring.) Saalfield is willing to serve as Chair. Other members are urged to consider if they would like to run for the Chair's position. All agreed that leadership should change following ATM and at the time of year when new appointments are made (generally, April and May are when the BoS makes these appointments. Feist repeated his strong feeling that the job of the Chair is to set the agenda and run the meetings and public hearings, serving as ex officio member of all committees. However, he stressed, the Chair ought not to be liaison with any group the

HHC is working with or point person for any cause. Minar suggested that one way to more evenly distribute the administrative workload of the group is for the Chair to assign, on a rotating basis, each new application to a different member of the commission. Members thought this a good idea, agreeing with Saalfield that such a system would provide a handy and needed learning opportunity for all members in the process and procedures used for public applications.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the public discussion period; K. **Swanton** (HHC alternate) recused himself from the HHC side of the table for this discussion (as resident of the property in question and husband of the owner). The public period of the meeting ended without comment. Swanton showed a photo of the replacement Anderson window he and his wife would like to install replacing the bay window on the north face of their house. Three 6 over 6 double hung windows, clad, would be installed with trim between each window and a sill applied to unify them. The look of the assembly would approximate the look of the older window assemblies on the house. The application was unanimously approved.

George Hayes, 2 and 6 Littleton Road, has already completed the work for which his application applies on both buildings. Members were charged with determining whether the change Hayes made was substantial or insubstantial. The application has been submitted ex post facto. Harvey Industries windows were installed. Hayes had already received HHC approval for a replacement roof and says he did not want to wait for the permitting process in order to get the work done. (Hayes originally only applied for this change to the property at 2 Littleton, but then revealed that windows were also replaced at 6 Littleton, which he also owns; he did not file a separate application for that property.) Hayes intends to remove the existing storm windows. No re-framing was done. The light divisions are not created by wooden strips but by metal inserts installed (by the manufacturer) between the exterior and interior panes of glass. This type of window is referred to as 'grid between glass' in the industry. Members voted unanimously that the change Hayes made was substantial and that, therefore, a public meeting will be scheduled. Cutler requested detailed information about the replacement window (ideally, including before and after photos). Sprague will access real estate records, with photographs, from the listing used when Hayes bought the property and bring them to the next meeting. Martin suggested Hayes supply a schedule with each window type detailed and a cut sheet provided for each style for every window visible from a public way. Feist has surveyed the historical commission list serve how this issue might be handled. Many respondents felt that the application should be handled as a new application, with any decision made regarding the replacement windows as if no funds had yet been expended. Cutler

suggested that if the prior style had been 6 over 1, as are now installed, Hayes might be able to exchange only the top sash for each of the windows.

Roben Campbell, Still River Road, has lately researched the ground plan of the **Shaker Burial Ground** and presented an abbreviated version of a talk she recently gave at the Old Town Library (with slides) on this topic. In attendance was Whit Sprague, the Cemetery Commissioner serving as advocate for the restoration of the cast iron markers on that site. Her research has chiefly involved the placement of the metal markers and the pattern that emerges from that placement. Tangentially she has also studied 'the plight' of Shaker cemeteries. The burial ground consists of 10 rows. Campbell's study began with a diagram (by Wendell Hess) provided by the Boston Area Shaker Study Group. This list shows lots of gaps. Using Elvia Scorgie's list (1950s) RC was able to fill in many of the gaps in the Hess list. The high estimate of the number of markers once in the burial ground is 314. Campbell estimates that there are 53 missing markers, more than a third created by a tree felled during the 1938 hurricane. (Less than a third of the missing markers were decimated by vandalism, she estimates.) Markers are divided into three periods: 1791-1818 (Formative Period), 1819 – 1871 (Middle Period, the period the Shakers flourished in Harvard) and 1872 – last burial (Period of Decline). Leadership, (Shaker) family association and gender were all taken into account when individual marker placement was determined. Campbell pointed out the 'promenade' between rows 5 and 6, double the distance between all other rows. A gross division she has noticed is the demarcation between one side or another of this wide aisle. Distinct patterns emerge in regard to gender, family association and leadership status in relation to one of the three temporal periods Campbell defines. (These patterns fall apart in the Period of Decline as the population of Shakers decline. Hired help who recognized no order were the work force at the end.)

In November 1872 guidelines were issued by the New Lebanon ministry after they had noticed what were considered inappropriate expenditures in relation to new grave markers in some New England communities. The guidelines that were issued encouraged all Shaker communities to adopt simple, humble designs. In 1873 a sample cast iron marker was made and adopted in New Lebanon. No other burial ground converted all their markers to cast iron, other than Harvard. Shaker populations were in decline – particularly among the brethren – and funds were straightened. In 1879, however, Harvard made a complete conversion to cast markers. The sister who spearheaded the work died shortly after the project was completed. Only Harvard and Watervliet have extant cast markers. These are the only two Shaker burial grounds that receive regular care. In both cases the burial grounds are under the care of the citizens of the town. (Ann Lee is buried in Watervliet.) Campbell feels that only 8 markers are missing and that the

location of each marker can be determined with certainty. The town of Harvard bought the property in 1940 although the Shaker community closed in the late 19th century (check this fact). Since that time various volunteer efforts have maintained the markers, in concert with the DPW which has maintained the site. Campbell has seen old photos of the graveyard which show painted markers. It is impossible, she says, to know when the markers were first painted and by whom.

Whit Sprague, Saalfield, Cutler, Martin and Rhonda Sprague will all serve on the committee that researches the restoration of the markers. Roben Campbell agreed to help the effort. Saalfield will contact Sprague to set up a first meeting.

Cutler reported that the **CPC** voted down all but one proposal they were presented this year. The HHC request for an additional \$100k for the restoration of the Town Hall was rejected for the next cycle due to the uncertainty around the direction of that project at this time. Swanton attended the All Boards meeting last Saturday and asked to address the issue of the Town Hall's need for a new paint job. Cutler reminded him that a contract has been signed for a study to be performed by a construction consultant and that a two year window exists for the beginning of the work. Swanton offered to draft a letter for D. Coots to review which would detail an update of the progress of this project.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roseanne Saalfield