

TOWN OF STOW

Notes Taken for the Community Preservation Committee by Deb Seith

Date: December 3, 2009

Location: Town Building

Stow Historical Commission **Topic: Stone Building**

On December 3, 2009 the Historical Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting and discussed the Stone Building as part of their posted agenda. Some members from the ESBC were in attendance as well as other residents and some members of various Town organizations.

Linda Stokes, a CPC member, is chairperson of the Stow Historical Commission (SHC).

Deb Seith (Admin CPC) and Bill Byron (Member CPC) arrived at the meeting after it was already in progress.

Discussion Notes:

- Lew Halprin provided some quotes for moving the Stone Building and a proposal for creating an educational/historic area on the knoll; incorporating the Stone Building, Blacksmith Shop, and West School
 - The Blacksmith shop should not be too hard to move.
 - The West School is made of bricks and could be dismantled and moved.
 - Lew suggested that bricks could be engraved as a fund raiser.
 - The Stone Building poses a more complex building to move but it can be done (the cost needs to be further investigated).
 - Lew suggested restoring the Stone Building and Blacksmith shop & creating a historic exhibit.
 - This is a possible solution but a lot of things would have to be worked out including the financials.
 - West School is on its original site but not many people visit it.
 - Why does the Blacksmith shop have to be moved? ESBC members said it was due to electrical trench.
 - ESBC will know within a week when the electrical trench will be dug.
 - Shelburne farm has expressed interest in housing the Blacksmith shop, but they do not want to pay to have it moved or restored.
 - If the Town allows someone to take possession of the Blacksmith shop there is a process that will have to be followed and the SHC will probably want to attach some restrictions.
 - If CPA funds are used that would add some restrictions on the structure(s).

- The ESBC sent in their application (for the School Building site) to the State Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in mid November and sent a copy of the project notification form to the Stow Historical Commission. MHC policy is to respond within 30 days and comments are accepted until that time.
 - Susan McLaughlin (SHC member) spoke to someone at the MHC and received clarification on the process. She said that if construction will have an adverse effect on a historic structure, then the MHC will ask for a consultation with the Town organizations. Susan reported that demolition is considered an adverse effect.
 - The Stone Building is on the States list of Historic Assets.
 - There was some disagreement between ESBC members and SHC members as to the Stone Building and if it is a Historic Asset or a Historical Asset. A historic asset has a great impact on history; a historical asset has history to it. The parties agreed to let the MHC decide which category the Stone Building and Blacksmith shop fall into.

- Can funds slotted for the Stone Building demolition be used to move the Stone Building? Members from the ESBC believe this could be accomplished if the ESBC voted to do so.
- The SHC decided to draft a letter to the MHC and meet on Tuesday, December 8th to review and approve it.

Deb's view of the meeting: The tone of the meeting was quite heated at times. There were several discussions related to blame and timing that have little relevance at this point. The ESBC members seem most concerned with jeopardizing their timeline and State funding. In general, it seemed to me, that the Historical Commission is looking for a win-win situation in which the School Building project can go forward on the anticipated timeline but also work around saving the Stone Building. It was my understanding that if it has to be a win-lose situation the SHC would back off on keeping the Stone Building at its current location in order to save the school building project.