

May 22, 2012
Historical Commission Meeting

The Upton Historical Commission met at 7 pm on May 22, 2012 at the Police Station. In attendance were Chairman Barbara Burke, Commission members Joyce Heywood, Cathy Taylor, and Russ Wood, plus associate member, George Patterson. Also in attendance were town residents Maureen Byrne and Howard Glassman.

Minutes of April 17 Meeting: The meeting minutes were approved unanimously, with 1 correction, on a motion by Russ, with a second by Cathy. The correction was to insert the words “in part” to the following sentence: “She would like to see a sign at the park that lets visitors know that the park was purchased with CPC funds.” It should read: “She would like to see a sign at the park that lets visitors know that the park was purchased, in part, with CPC funds.”

Minutes of May 1 Meeting: The meeting minutes were approved unanimously, on a motion by Russ, with a second by Cathy.

Treasurer’s Report: No treasurer’s report was given.

Other Business:

Update on Milhaus Apartment Request for State Funding: In follow up to Milhaus’ denial from Mass Historical for their planned usage of material to replace the apartment roofing, Barbara contacted Lanie Finbury of Overlook Associates in Salem, MA, to see what, if anything, Milhaus wanted the Commission to do to help. Barbara let Lanie know of the Commission’s feelings that there really wasn’t anything we could do beyond the initial letter of support that we sent previously. Lanie agreed and stated that Milhaus is going to have to negotiate further with Mass Historical. Milhaus expects no further action from the Commission.

During the discussion, Maureen asked if the Milhaus building is listed on the National Register. Barbara clarified that yes, the town has 2 buildings on the National Register, the Milhaus Apartments (originally the hat factory) and the Upton Town Hall.

Update on Heritage Park – Maintenance, Funding, Etc.: In follow up to previous meeting discussions, Barbara met with Blythe Robinson and discussed the possibility of the town taking care of maintenance of the park, which presently primarily includes mowing the fields. This task is currently being done on a volunteer basis, which could present obvious problems at any time. Blythe was hesitant to add any more responsibilities to the town, but suggested that if the new DPW director is willing, she will OK it. The Commission will follow up with the new director.

Barbara feels that it is time to get going with a “Friends of Heritage Park” group to move the park forward with plantings, futures needs and usages, etc., and to work on fundraising in order to both maintain and improve the park. Cathy mentioned that she has a couple of lists that were generated at the park opening of people interested in the park. There was 1 list of those interested in helping with plantings and another for those with non-specific general interests. She will email the lists to the Commission.

It’s also time to meet with Cissy Henderson about the park plantings and to further discuss Cissy’s plans to conduct a fundraiser for the park. Barbara reminded the Commission that Cissy

plans on coordinating a tour of historic houses in town. She will also handle publicity, bulletins, contracts, etc. The Historical Society and Commission members are requested to help at the homes. The Historical Society has agreed to pick up the extra costs of the event, after Cissy's costs and work are completed. All proceeds will go to Heritage Park. Barbara will contact Cissy to set up a time she can meet with Cathy and Joyce about the park plantings.

Report on Men's Club Funding Request: Barbara received word from the Men's Club that they are offering us a booth at the annual fair and fireworks display on the last Saturday in June. They also suggested that we write a proposal for funding, which they would like by the first week in June in order to bring it up at their June meeting. Jonathan agreed to write the proposal request in the amount of "3 or 4 thousand."

Archaeology Report Due This Month (May) & Related: We have not received the archaeology report yet. Marty had stated previously that he was waiting for the OSL report to come in so that he could include it in his archaeology report. Cathy will follow up with Marty for a status update.

Cathy reported that David Gutbrod contacted her regarding a "computer overlay" that he's done that we can access. She is unclear of the details and will follow up for clarification and more information.

Eagle Scout Project – Shed & Funding: We received word from Scout, Tyler Bartlett, that he has received troop approval to proceed with his Eagle project, which is to erect a shed for Heritage Park. His plans are all ready and will include a shed that is large enough to fit a tractor. One tree will need to come down in order to put up the shed. Barbara will contact Rufin Vanbossuyt about taking it down. She suggested that the Commission should make a donation to Tyler's funding. Cathy asked if we had a sense of the total cost of the project, to which Barbara responded, "about \$500." No action was taken at this time regarding the donation.

Other Business (Not Received by Chair Within 48 Hours):

Henderson Prospect St. House: Joyce asked about the status of the house on Prospect Street that Cissy Henderson wants removed from her property. The Commission had requested that it not be destroyed. Barbara stated that Cissy's attempts to find someone willing to move the house were unsuccessful and the house will indeed be demolished.

New Town Website: Barbara let us know that the town is moving forward with plans to update its website, as per a vote taken at the last town meeting. This new site will most likely include a page for the Historical Commission. This holds promise for our hopes (from previous meetings) to include more information on our page, such as the reports on the chamber testing, etc., which people have requested. All groups will be included in the discussion phase that has begun. Glen Fowler is the contact person for this.

National Register Proposal – Pratt Hill - Doug Harris: Doug Harris sent an email to the Commission, in follow up to our request for further information regarding the Pratt Hill property that the Narragansetts purchased and how it might fit in with the possibility of a (discontinuous) National Register status for that Pratt Hill property and the Pearson Chamber. He confirmed that the 3 best known cairns (mentioned in the book, *Manitou*) "are now rubble," having been destroyed by the previous owner who sold the property to Doug's group. However, he feels, "so

much more was discovered in the wake of that tragic event,” that the site is still worthy of research and protection.

Doug also suggested that filmmaker Ted Timreck would be a great resource for research of both areas, as he has extensive film documentation of the 3 cairns from years past, as well as an interview with the late Malcolm Pearson. Doug also recommended Ted if the Commission would like to do a video of the chamber which, he suggested, could include Ted’s old footage with an interview of Barbara to update the chamber/park now. Doug felt the Commission and the Narragansett Tribal Office might work together on such a project.

National Register Proposal – Upton North & CCC: There was nothing new to report on the submitted proposal for Upton North and the CCC. Barbara reminded us that we were told it could take up to 2 years for a decision.

There being nothing further, the Commission adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Joyce Heywood