

January 15, 2015

Historical Commission Meeting (minutes approved Feb 19, 2015 with no changes)

The Upton Historical Commission met at 7 pm on January 15, 2015 at the Town Hall, 2nd floor meeting room. In attendance were Chairperson, Cathy Taylor; Vice-chair, Joyce Heywood; members Howie Glassman, Ken Picard, and Russ Wood. Also joining us as guests were Jennifer Doyle and Mark LeClair.

Minutes of December 18, 2014 Meetings: The minutes were unanimously approved with one change. The sentence reading, “Cathy will make preliminary phone calls to get quotes” was changed to, “Cathy will make preliminary phone calls to get rough estimates.” The word “quotes” was changed to “rough estimates.”

Treasurer’s Report: Howie reported an expense account balance of \$635.88 and a gift account of \$3,721.86. Cathy reported that she has been working in the Commission office and has accrued expenses of \$18.36 for new file folders. On a motion by Howie, with a second by Ken, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the expense.

Other Business:

Commission Mission Statement: Cathy presented a document from the State outlining mission statements. After a brief discussion, it was decided to go with the revised statement done by Ken that we have been discussing for the last few months. We can revisit the State document at a later date and add it to the current one as the Commission feels necessary

Historical Commission/Historical Society Meeting with Selectmen: Joyce spoke of the background as to why we felt it would be good to clarify the differences between the Commission and the Society. There has been confusion by town citizens and the Commission on just who is responsible for historical preservation and who actually owns historical items. The topic was initially raised on the Mass Historical blog where there was confusion and a legal battle when a town historical society decided to sell off some of its museum items. The town commission thought they actually owned the items and did not want them sold. Joyce felt it would be prudent for the future of Upton if we clarified things here before any issues occur.

It was agreed that the Commission and the Society should meet before going to the Selectmen’s meeting. Cathy and Joyce will meet with the Society. It was noted that the Selectmen meeting, originally scheduled for January 20 was changed to January 27.

Historic Preservation Plans For Older Burial Grounds: In order to keep up with our goal of preserving Upton’s two historical burial grounds we hope to be able to have a historical land survey done. This is something recommended by Mass Historical. The survey would include land surveys, prime deed research, assessment of grave stones, along with a preservation management plan for both cemeteries.

The JMA company that did our archaeological work on the chamber, does provide this service, but they usually have another company called Chicora from South Carolina do the actual work. Because they need overnight accommodations, this work can be very expensive. Another company that can do the work is Dodson. Both companies would be in the \$20 - \$30K price range according to Cathy’s rough estimates. Ken feels those amounts might require RFPs and advertising. We need to check further on this.

Funding will be a concern. Howie will check on money/funding that might be available in town for this type of project.

Commission Office Update: While working in the Commission office, Cathy found the list of potential street names that we did a few years ago. She passed it out to Commission members. This topic had been under discussion lately when we were asked to name two new streets.

Trails Grant Signage: Cathy showed us documents as examples of what we might put on the signs for Heritage Park. In particular, we would like to get some information into the new kiosk asap, including a map of the park. This can be a quick one, with a better, more formal one done later. It needs to have a diagram of the chamber. We should also give a brief detail of the park history, opening, and include the fact that the park was purchased with CPA funds and private donations. On a motion by Ken, with a second by Russ, it was unanimously approved to go forward with signage.

Heritage Park Projects – Phase 1: Cissy Henderson and Derek Mager will be invited to our next meeting (or a time of their convenience) to update us on their plans for the phase 1 plantings to be done this spring. They talked about having a “water buffalo” from the fire department installed at the park in order to water the new plants and can update us on that as well.

We have \$381 left over from Tyler Bartlett’s scout project in order to buy tools for the shed. Russ brought up the fact that a former member of the Commission had donated tools to the park. We should learn where they ended up and will need to check with the town manager, since the DPW director resigned.

Archaeology Day Follow-up: Cathy reported that Glen Fowler made copies of the presentations from our archaeology day last October. We would like to have them shown on the Upton channel.

Special Town Meeting: Ken let us know that there will be a special town meeting on February 11 regarding the town’s wish to purchase property at 2 Grove Street in order to get some more parking space for the Town Hall. The Selectmen would like to demolish the building. This “Stoddard Aldrich store” building is historic and will fall under the town’s demolition delay bylaw review.

Mark LeClair Eagle Scout Project: Mark LeClair’s Eagle Scout kiosk project is complete. He came before the Commission to have us sign off on it. Everyone commented how nice the kiosk is and how it fits in so well with the shed which was erected as another Scout project.

Letter Of Support For Town Hall Preservation Project Award: Ken let us know that Kelly McElreath has asked the Commission for a letter of support. The town is going for a preservation award from Mass Historical. On a motion from Ken, with a second by Russ, the Commission voted unanimously to approve a letter.

Request From The Town Of Ashland: Cathy reported that she had a request from the Town of Ashland to give input on Upton’s National Register historic districts process. She met with them and discussed.

There being nothing further, the Commission adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Joyce Heywood, Vice-Chair