

Minutes
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission
January 8, 2018, 7:00pm
Small Conference Room, Town Manager's Office
Second Floor
Great Barrington Town Hall
334 Main Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230

ATTENDING:

- *Members:* Marilyn Bisiewicz, Malcolm Fick, Don Howe, Paul Ivory, Gary Leveille, David Rutstein, Bill Nappo

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2017

- On a motion by Malcolm and a second by Marilyn, the Minutes of November 13, 2017 passed unanimously.

COLLECTIONS

Ramsdell Library Renovations and Shelving

- *Renovations:* Paul reported that, according to Sean at the DPW, the town's immediate priority is to secure the building's chimneys. The project, to be completed in the spring, will entail rebuilding the chimneys from the roofline up, replacing the bricks in kind and replicating the historic decorative detail. Bill distributed "Ramsdell Library Chimneys October 2, 2017," a report summarizing the project. Paul thanked Bill for preparing this documentation. Sean understands the need electrical upgrades as the basis for powering the equipment that will help stabilize the storage environment on the second floor. However, this work won't be completed any time soon. He suggested the possibility of installing a floor vent to allow heat to rise from the first floor.
- *Shelving:* Paul distributed copies of product specification sheets for various shelving unit options. The commission agreed with Don's recommendation to use the ULINE bulk storage racks. The individual units shouldn't be too big or flimsy, 48" maximum height - 2-3 archival boxes high, and contain three shelves - bottom, middle, top. The project should include shelving for all boxes, not limited to the Don Victor Collection. Paul will meet with Bernie to calculate the shelving configuration, the number of units to order and place the order.

Archival Use Policy Form Draft

- Gary and Paul suggested edits to the draft prepared by Bernie. Bernie incorporated these into a new draft which Paul will forward to the membership for comments and formal approval at the next meeting.

CTSB Videotape Collection Finding Aid

- Paul distributed the Finding Aid, prepared by Bernie, of the box of DVD discs and tapes rescued by Gary from CTSB during the station's to discard them. They are a visual and audio record of Selectmen, Annual and Special Town, Planning Board, Finance, School District and other miscellaneous meetings during the 2003 to 2016 period. The collection includes 2 VHS tapes, 2 DVD discs and 305 Fujifilm MiniDVD discs. Although the Commission doesn't have a miniDVD player, Don said they can be converted.

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY UPDATE AND TOWN WEB SITE

- Malcolm reported on his investigation into the best means to enter the survey data onto the Town website. He discussed the issue with Town Clerk Marie Ryan, who administers the site. There are four possible options.
 1. Linking to MACRIS (which will eventually include the data) would be easy to execute. The immediate disadvantage of this option is the lengthy lag time for entry of new material on the MACRIS database.
 2. Convert the material to a PDF and enter onto website. This would be a very large file that would make it time consuming for a user to download.
 3. Convert each individual site into a separate file. This would enable a user to target specific sites. It would require an index and would obviate the need to execute a lengthy download of everything. Entering all this material would be labor intensive and time-consuming.
 4. Copy all data onto a CD(s) and make available with the hard copies that will be deposited at the repositories for public access (i.e. Mason and Ramsdell Libraries, etc.). The website link would notify the consumer where the discs are.

- Malcolm recommended option number 4 as the best short-term means to get the material to the public.
- For the long range, the best and most useful approach is to have all the forms available on-line in a single database. There are firms that provide this service. They would make the program accessible through writing a program and hosting it. Malcolm estimated it would take about 20-30 hours of work and cost in the \$2,000 range. Paul will assemble exactly what will be made available and send to Malcolm so he knows what we're working with.
- Once the final scope of the publicly accessible material is prepared, reviewed and approved by the HC, Paul will check with Kwik Print about their cost to print and place in binders five full copies to be deposited in the Mason Library, Ramsdell Library, Town Planner's office, Town Clerk's office and a working copy in the town archives. The original material will be stored in an acid-free environment in the town archives.

HISTORY OF SEARLES HIGH SCHOOL BOOK

- David presented his just-published book on the history of Searles High School. He noted that there is no secondary material, as a monograph, on the school district before regionalization. His research included examining all town reports. He also noted that the bound volumes of Town Reports from the 19th century are missing. Perhaps the Massachusetts Historical Society or the Berkshire Athenaeum have copies in their collections.
- The book is on sale at the Bookloft. Publicity will intensify when warmer weather is here.
- The GBHC praised and thanked David for his work in documenting the history of this educational, architectural and social force in the community.

SEARLES POWER HOUSE DOCUMENTATION

- Paul reported that in December David Dempsey gave him access to the power station and Quonset hut building for complete interior and exterior photographic documentation. He transferred the images to a flash drive.

BELCHER SQUARE TROLLEY WAITING SHELTER

- Paul reported that he discussed the shelter condition with Sean and Chris Rembold. The town owns the shelter; it is on Weir Park, administered by the Parks Commission. Sean said he will bring up this issue at the Commission's meeting that evening. Both officials seemed amenable to taking steps to preserve the shelter. Perhaps a CPA grant could fund the work which would need to include a conditions assessment, treatment recommendations and their implementation.

NEWSBOY WATERLINES UPDATE

- Paul reported that in response to the HC's approval, and with edits to the draft by Bill and Gary, he sent an e-mail to Sean supporting the waterline connection to the fountain, as well as the installation of a spigot in an unobtrusive spot near the fountain to supply water for conservation treatment. Sean verbally approved of the waterline and said that the faucet will probably also be included. Paul told him that the HC would keep in contact with him as the project planning and execution unfolds.

CITIZENS' SPEAK

- No participants

OTHER BUSINESS

- As the HC's rep on the CP Committee, Bill reported that historic preservation projects were approved for the Clinton Church Restoration and the Town for restoration of the Town Hall steps.
- Marilyn reported that the Thursday Morning Club, of which she is a member, is planning to award a grant(s) totaling \$2,000 in the spring for in-town projects. She suggested applying for support for the trolley station repair (as a CPA match). Gary and Paul suggested contributing to a named project for the Historical Society's current capital campaign. Paul will notify Bob at the Society for follow-through.

NEXT MEETING

- Monday, March 5, 2018 at 7:00pm. Site to be determined.

ADJOURN