

Minutes
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission
November 13, 2017, 7:00pm
Meeting Room
Great Barrington Fire Station
37 State road
Great Barrington, MA 01230

ATTENDING:

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

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

- On a motion by Malcolm and a second by Don, the Minutes of September 11, 2017 passed unanimously.

COLLECTIONS

Ramsdell Library

- Don reported that, as a result his discussions with Sean at the DPW, he has concluded that no significant upgrades to the Commission's areas on the second floor can be undertaken until fundamental code requirements, such as replacing the knob and tube wiring, installing an ADA ramp, etc. are completed. This reality also obviates interim measures to stabilize the environment; as the new electrical system is the engine that drives all environmental control systems, we can't proceed until that is installed.
- Paul will check with Jennifer on the status of the RFP for professional services for the ADA ramp.
- Don also reminded that grants (from such organizations as the American Library Assoc.) to help fund the library's renovation projects are part of the equation. Their preparation require massive amounts of backup data derived from research.
- In discussing what should be done next:
 - If the planned installation of three-tiered shelving for the Don Victor collection is considerably delayed, Bill recommended a work party to cut and install 2x4s under the existing shelving to raise them off the floor as a measure to mitigate the effects of water build-up on the floor as a result of a roof leak.
 - Malcolm suggested the GBHC propose use of selected rooms in the building for semi-permanent and temporary exhibitions exploring such topics as Housatonic history. Gary felt this productive use of this historic building's spaces would make the Commission a useful asset in securing its short and long term future.

Draft Request for Use of Archival Materials Form

- Members reviewed Bernie's draft of a form to be completed by individuals requesting use of the archival collection. Gary sees needs for clarification and revision in some sections. Too, it may need to be simplified through tightening description of the services and prohibitions and by the use of bullets. He will continue his review, make edits on a Word doc. and forward his draft to the membership to comment and add edits. The members will send their comments on Gary's draft to Malcolm who will summarize into a draft to discuss at the next meeting.:-

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY AND UPDATE FOR POST-PROJECT PLANNING

- Paul reported that he has submitted the lengthy Final Report to MHC and that the survey is essentially completed. All that remains is finishing some of the required paperwork, making final payment to the contractor, completing final copies of the maps, which Chris Rembold has excellently managed, and receiving the official final project approval by MHC.
- The next step is assuring that there is public access to all of the forms. The Commission reviewed Para. 8, "Copies of Press Releases, etc.," of the Final Report to MHC which outlines measures to implement this goal. A key component is access via the town website. Malcolm stated that a discrete site just for the survey would need to be established. This could be directly accessed on the web and through a link on the town site. In addition to the forms, the site should also include the maps, Final Report and an index (to facilitate retrievals).
- The idea of providing a link to the MACRIS site was discussed as well but was judged to be more difficult to organize than the survey forms. Paul will ask Peter Stott at MHC if this has been, or can be, done and how.

- Paul will ask Jennifer who is now in charge of the town website so we can find out the requirements and procedures for including the link. Paul will inform Malcolm who will ascertain what needs to be done

SEARLES POWER HOUSE UPDATE

- Paul read the developer's response to the GBHC's e-mail and he will contact him regarding access for photography. Don reported that the building was still owned by Bill Dempsey. Paul will ask David Dempsey, who represents Bill, so we can ask permission to photograph the exterior and interior.
- Don stated that its use as a maintenance building was rejected as it was too small. Use as a restroom was discounted because the Parks Dept. didn't want to be responsible for sanitation requirements.
- Don stated that moving the building was a lot of work and that the disintegrating condition of the bricks could preclude their re-use or survive a move. It was probably easier to build a replica. In any discussions with the developer, the GBHC should cite the significance of maintaining its historic fabric and how this might be achieved. Gary suggested consulting Scotty Morrison, who moves old homes and is presently doing work at the Wheeler House, about the feasibility of a move that would keep the building intact.
- Don noted that the Searles site would have some public accessibility.

FY18 BUDGET AND WORK PLAN

- Paul distributed a current printout of the Commission's budget which registered \$21,006.61 from all fund categories (the amount for the September 11 meeting was \$21,536).
- Special Projects
Using the list of remainder fund project ideas recorded in the September minutes as a guide, the Commission discussed and assigned priorities to the various suggested programs.
 1. *Purchase and installation of shelving for the Don Victor Collection* This is the most straightforward, least complicated project. Gary said that Job Lots and the Home Depot web site carry the style of shelving needed. They should be delivered to the second floor. The first step is to calculate how many are needed and the configuration of their installation. Gary will check with Bernie on this project.
 2. *Fund the condition assessment and repair of the crumbling Belcher Square trolley waiting shelter* Gary reported that this structure is deteriorating rapidly. We first need to determine if the town or the state owns and would repair it. The assessor map would probably answer the ownership question.
 3. *Self-funding (the total cost) or using as a match (to a grant) preparation of the archaeology sites category of the historic resources survey* As the town is not a "Certified Local Government," we would not be eligible for a state survey grant for FY18. Too, Paul pointed out that the post-official grant period of our just-completed survey phase is full of significant and time-consuming projects, principally to provide public access to the generated materials.
 4. *Fund the research, design, installation and catalogue for a "Lost Great Barrington" exhibition* Paul is very interested in undertaking this project and stated that the first phase is research which doesn't require immediate funds.

NEWSBOY MAINTENANCE UPDATE

- Annual Maintenance: Paul reported that Daedalus completed its scheduled maintenance in October.
- Water Lines: Paul distributed a draft e-mail to Sean Van Deusen, GB DPW, requesting that a fountain connector be included in the planned project to replace the water mains on Maple Ave. In reviewing the draft, Commission members suggested the following additions:
 - Gary reported that there was a water line to the statue but was discontinued around 1995. This fact may be useful in project planning.
 - Bill said that an automatic float valve for the inflowing water to the pump is needed to automatically shut off in case there's an overflow. He also recommended installation of a water spigot in an unobtrusive spot near the monument for use in conservation treatment. Now, water for care of the statue must be carted in from the town hall or wastewater treatment facility.

FY17 ANNUAL REPORT

- On a motion by Malcolm and a second by Gary, the FY17 Annual Report for the Historical Commission was approved unanimously as submitted.

CITIZENS' SPEAK

- No participants

OTHER BUSINESS

- Certified Local Government: Paul reminded those who haven't submitted their resumes, needed by Chris Rembold in the application, to do so as soon as possible. Don said he is handing in his through the HDC.
- Period Photo of Unidentified Greenhouse: Bill shared a framed photograph of a greenhouse he purchased at the recent Blessed Theresa tag sale and asked if anyone could identify it. Gary thought it may be the Tefft property or Brookside.
- History of Searles School: Gary lauded David's book, being published in December. The membership wholeheartedly concurred with Gary's praise and thanked David for this contribution to local history.

NEXT MEETING

- Monday, January 8, 2018 at 7:00pm. Site to be determined.

ADJOURN