

Minutes
Meeting of Great Barrington Historical Commission
September 11, 2017, 7:00pm
Meeting Room
Great Barrington Fire Station
37 State road
Great Barrington, MA 01230

ATTENDING:

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

MINUTES OF JULY 17, 2017

- On a motion by Malcolm and a second by David, the Minutes of July 17, 2017 passed unanimously.

COLLECTIONS

Archivist

- Paul and Gary met with Bernie Drew to discuss the position and its projects for FY18. The priorities involve cataloguing the Housatonic Congregational Church Collection and the artifacts stored in the Wheeler House barn. Since these tasks involve PastPerfect software, the Commission's budget will fund the company's software support network and tutorial as well as instructions, as needed, from Margaret Cherin so Bernie can learn and effectively use the system.
- Malcolm stressed the importance of developing a means for public accessibility to the archives, employing mechanisms to let the public know what we have and how they can get to it.

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

- The survey is nearing completion. Paul, MHC staff and the Larson Fisher Consultants concluded their final conference call at which critiques of the work were discussed, final deadlines established and a punch list created. Paul expressed his thanks to the in-depth participation of Gary and Bernie Drew who spent countless hours reviewing and editing the draft forms, locating resources and providing specific information and illustrations. Their contributions clearly enhanced the substance of the survey, providing an abundance of material on this first batch of historic sites for the public to consume. Indeed our efforts were lauded by MHC and Larson Fisher during the conference call, describing the detailed responses as surpassing the survey performances of other historical commissions. Neil Larson called our work a "new normal."
- Paul will apply to the CPC and MHC to fund the next round of the survey and asked the membership for ideas for the next line of priority sites to be covered. Bill asked for a one-page summary sheet of the next phase so he can use it to defend the project during CPC deliberations.
- To better inform the public of the results of this survey, the HC needs to investigate providing on-line access to its results and perhaps presenting a talk on the findings to the Historical Society.

SEARLES POWER HOUSE UPDATE

- Paul reported that, according to Chris Rembold, the power house will probably be relocated to the end of the new access road at Memorial Field and along the fence line for use as a maintenance building. The new location will be close to its original site. It was determined that its re-use as a restroom building for Memorial Field was too difficult to implement. The Parks Commission prefers the building be moved this fall.

FY18 BUDGET AND WORK PLAN

- Referencing the meeting handout, "FY18 Budget and Work Plan," Paul cited \$21,536 in the current Historical Commission account. This amount includes \$11,902 remainder funds, \$2,144 in a donated funds account and \$7,490 in the approved FY18 budget.

- Sound non-profit fiscal management calls for expending available funds on achieving organizational mission. The Commission discussed various projects to which the remainder funds could be applied. Ideas included:
 - Self-funding (the total amount) or using as a match (to a grant) to complete the archaeology sites category of the historic resources survey during the interim period between this grant round and the next one
 - Fund the condition assessment and repair of the crumbling Belcher Square trolley waiting shelter. The state repaired the shelter when it moved it during the reconfiguration of that intersection but it has fallen into sad disrepair
 - Fund the research, design, installation and catalogue for a "Lost Great Barrington" exhibition. The project would include not only structures, but the denuding of architectural features that enrich the design of structures, such as the Eastlake style balustrade that used to grace the Taconic Ave. bridge.
 - Shelving for the storage of the archival collections at the Ramsdell Library, especially the Don Victor Collection. Home Depot sells units with three shelves each which are within the weight load limit. The bottom shelves of the units need to be raised above floor level in case the roof leaks. Bill suggested either buying the shelves already assembled, hiring someone to assemble or holding a work party to complete the assembly and installation. Gary will talk to Bernie about investigating this project.
- Ramsdell Library HVAC: Don reported that the existing old knob and tube electrical system makes the installation of HVAC infeasible. The town is in the process of completing a study to upgrade the whole building, including the electrical system. Don didn't think there were any effective temporary measures to ameliorate the environmental fluctuations in the interim period. The consensus of the DPW chief and the Town Manager is that the entire building needs to be addressed, not just the second floor, even for a temporary fix. Their plan involves seeking money from the state.

SEARLES HIGH SCHOOL DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

- Because of a possible ethical conflict, Bill has elected to withdraw his business from removing the artifacts from the building. The developer will seek another party to perform this task. Paul reported that the final list of items has been completed and submitted to the developer.

A.M.E. ZION CHURCH UPDATE

- Paul reported Clinton Church Restoration, under the umbrella of Housatonic Heritage, is applying for grants from the National Park Service and the CPC and has asked for letters of support from the Historical Commission. In response to Paul's request for authority to write the letters, the motion by Malcolm and second by Gary to authorize Paul to send the letters in support for CCR's applications passed unanimously.

NEWSBOY MAINTENANCE UPDATE

- Annual Maintenance: Paul reported that Daedalus is scheduled to perform its annual maintenance on the statue on September 22.
- Water Lines: Paul reported that Chris Rembold had informed him of the Fire District's plans to replace the water mains on Maple Ave. Chris has talked to Sean about a new line to the statue to connect to the fountain to eliminate the labor intensive and sometimes sporadic replenishment of water for the circulating pump. Engineering studies are being done now but the dates of project execution have not been determined. Paul will draft an e-mail to Chris and the DPW requesting that the fountain connector be a part of the project, but before sending, will share the draft with Bill and Gary to make sure the fountain technology facts are straight. We need to point out that the fountain is fed by a re-circulating pump in a continuous feed and that this option is better than installing a spigot for refill.
- Bench: Gary reported that he has been negotiating with the New England Association of Circulation Executives on the specifications of the bench they have offered to donate to Newsboy Park. He has specified that the bench

be low-to-no maintenance, sturdy and not subject to easy vandalism. He made selections from a range of benches they had submitted to him to review. He is waiting to hear back from them.

CITIZENS' SPEAK

- No participants

NEXT MEETING

- Monday, November 13, 2017 at 7:00pm. Site to be determined.

ADJOURN