

## Historical Commission Meeting Minutes – Approved

DATE: May 8, 2023

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Claire Teague Senior Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gary Leveille, James Mercer, Marilyn Bisiewicz, David Rutstein, Malcolm Fick

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Bill Nappo, Paul Ivory

1. Chairman Fick called the meeting to order at 5:00pm..
2. *Mr. Mercer moved to approve the draft minutes of the January 9, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leveille. All present voted to approve.*
3. Old Business
  - CPA Update-- Mr. Mercer reported that one of the historical CPA requests was voted down by Town Meeting.
  - Updates on various projects if available:
    - i. Housatonic School – Mr. Leveille and Mr. Ivory both responded to requests for information about previous efforts to apply for National Register listing for the school.
    - ii. Newsboy statue – The park surrounding the statue has not been landscaped as requested.
    - iii. Trolley Shelter – The Historical Commission is responsible for educational signage as part of the project. Mr. Leveille said there were no period photos of the shelter. It was generally agreed that an interpretive sign could be developed, similar to those on the River Walk. It would feature a history of the trolley throughout the town, not just the Trolley Shelter. Mr. Fick will explore options for an interpretive sign.
    - iv. Utility Box Graphics – Mr. Mercer reported that the box near CVS should be installed soon and that the graphics for other boxes has been designed.
    - v. Church Park sign – Ms. Bisiewicz reported that she attended the Parks Commission meeting that agreed to change the name of West Street Park to Church Park, as requested by the Historical Commission. The Parks Commission agreed to share the cost with the Historical Commission with the Historical Commission taking the lead. Mr. Mercer will contact Craig Okerstrom-Lang for help in designing the sign.
  - Smartphone Walking Tour status
    - i. Mr. Fick finally sent the audio script changes to Mr. Leveille, who will record them with the able assistance of Ms. Katelyn Leveille.
    - ii. Mr. Fick reported that the Cultural District has expressed interest in a wayfinding tour.

- GB Airport National Register eligibility -- Mr. Fick reported that he was able to do some preliminary work by exploring listings of other airports. He said he thought it unlikely that the airport could site “national significance” in its application. He will continue.
- Artifacts Policy – Mr. Fick reported that he sent the letter to the Selectboard requesting that a policy be established that any proposal to dispose of any of the Town’s historical property first be reviewed by the Historical Commission. Mr. Fick will request such a policy at the May 10, 2023 Selectboard meeting.

4. New Business

- The Historical Commission was copied on a letter concerning a request to list 106 Cottage Street on the National Register. No members were aware of the project or the request.
- The Commission received a thank-you letter for donating an artifact to the Alford Historical Commission. The letter was mistakenly addressed. The donation was made by Mr. Leveille personally.
- Mr. Fick reported that he participated in a workshop with the Western Mass Historical Commission Coalition on April 20, 2023. Ms. Bisiewicz said he did a good job, for which comment Mr. Fick expressed his gratitude.

5. Other Member Issues

- Mr. Fick reported that he had just received a request for historical information concerning modifications to an existing telecommunications tower at Butternut. No members expressed historical concerns about the location.
- Mr. Mercer suggested that the Commission begin consideration of merging the Historical Society with the Commission. He outlined the precarious financial state of the Society. All members expressed concern for the future of the Society’s collection, which is important to the Town. All agreed that further discussions with the Society and Town leadership to explore options was warranted.

6. Citizen’s Speak – There were no non-members attending.

7. Next Meeting Date – July 10, 2023 at 5:00 pm at a site to be determined.

8. Adjourn – Without objection, Mr. Fick adjourned the meeting at 6:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Fick  
Chairman