

**ASHFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2011
7:30 PM**

PRESENT:

Steve Gougeon, Mollie Babize, Nancy Garvin, Gerard McGovern

MINUTES

...of February 24, 2011 were approved.

ANTENNAS ON TOWN HALL?

No further word from Dave Dwyer, so no discussion.

DOT WORK IN SOUTH ASHFIELD

Nancy Garvin, Stuart Harris and Mollie Babize met at the former mill site on the South River near Bullitt Road on Sunday 3/20 to look at the old mill foundations. Peter Wiitanan met them as well. Stuart explained the layout of the mill, and his experience as a 16-year-old removing what remained in 1967 after the building caved in. The up-and-down saw that was here is on display in the Historical Society.

Monday 3/21 Nancy accompanied the Conservation Commission for a site visit with roughly a dozen people from MA Department of Transportation, along with representatives from MA Fish & Wildlife. The engineers explained their plan to stabilize the retaining walls along two spots on the river, one just upstream from the mill site and one downstream. They said they would not disturb the mill site in any way. If additional stone is needed to reinforce the retaining walls, it will not come from the foundation, but most likely will be brought in from elsewhere.

The river is on the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species maps of habitat to be protected, since there a rare (endangered?) fish called the long-nosed sucker has been identified in these waters.

DOT will be speaking about the project at Town Hall next Tuesday evening, 3/29/11 at 7:00 pm.

TOWN HALL REPAIRS

At a meeting of the Town Hall Committee on Monday 3/21, Stuart Harris presented a plan for renovations to the offices. He proposed organizing a volunteer effort to do the work, but the scope of the project may require a different approach. Some questions include where would the town employees work and keep offices open to the public during construction, and whether additional work needs to precede insulating the offices so a bigger problem with ventilation and mold doesn't result.

SUMMER TOURS : ASHFIELD HISTORY WRITTEN IN STONE

Dates proposed for three focused tours, to be sponsored by the Historical Commission next summer, are tentatively scheduled for **July 16th**, **July 30th**, and **August 13th**. These are Saturdays, with the following Sundays reserved as rain dates. Previously discussed topics include a visit to the stone bridge off Smith Road, another to a mill site (possibly the first mill in town near the Plain Cemetery), and the Spruce Corner cemetery (with a gathering at the

old schoolhouse after). Steve Gougeon also spoke with Jim Vieira about Jim's research on pre-colonial stone structures in Ashfield, which Jim has been describing in articles in the Ashfield News and West County/Shelburne Falls Independent. All agreed that would be a big draw, and decided to include it (if Jim is willing and available, preferably on the final date of 8/13) in lieu of the cemetery visit.

The stone bridge visit could be further illustrated with historical maps of the various road layouts over time in Ashfield, and the grist mill visit with a map of where all the mills in Ashfield were once located.

NEXT MEETING

Will be held Thursday, April 28, 2011 at 7:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully submitted by Mollie Babize