

ASHFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2012
7:30 PM

PRESENT:

Steve Gougeon, Mollie Babize, Nancy Garvin, Tristan Romer
(Gerard McGovern not in attendance.)

Corrections made at the 1/31/13 meeting are shown in red.

Meeting called to order 7:40 pm

MINUTES

...of July 26, 2012 were approved with the following correction:

Northern Construction is required to put snow fencing around the old mill foundations before they began their work; to date, they have not done so.

Nancy Garvin has been filing hard copies of the Commission minutes at the town office; Steve Gougeon will also post minutes on the website, as required.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Nancy notified the Commission of the annual meeting of the Historical Society on Tuesday, September 11th, at the Community Hall. Williamsburg historian Ralmon Jon Black will give a presentations on "Colonial Asheries and the Forgotten 18th Century Hilltown Potash Industry."

DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW

Chris Skelly from MA Historical Commission was unable to attend this meeting, but did address some of the questions the Commission raised about a demolition delay bylaw in a phone call to Steve. Among his comments:

- A demolition delay bylaw would provide Ashfield a minimum level of historic preservation protection. It provides a window of opportunity for saving a building, but no guarantee that anything will be saved.
- It should be applied town-wide, and not just within the national register district such as Ashfield center.
- The Commission ould need to be clear about the purpose of the bylaw and the procedures outlined in it; specific questions that come up in its administration could be discussed with MHC staff which provides assistance to local historical commissions.
- The bylaw would be brought to Town Meeting as a general bylaw, not a zoning bylaw. what % demolition of a building trigger this? Up to town bylaw? Could someone get around the D Bylaw by taking down to frame but putting up inconsistent façade. Very general response from Chris. Bring to Town Meeting as general, not zoning bylaw.
- Examples of buildings saved are highlighted in MHC's guidebook, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*.

Other questions were not addressed, and the Commission intends to set up a meeting with him at which time we can reiterate these questions, and also outline a process for public education. This issue needs a lot of public input, perhaps in an open Q&A session at which someone from the MHC could provide informed back-up.

MILL SITE ON 116

Nancy reported that a new set of plans for state highway work along the South River near Bullitt Road were delivered to the Conservation Commission, and they still do not identify the mill site. A coffer dam will be placed mid-stream to channel the flow while work is underway. Nancy is concerned that the "boulders" identified for this work not be mill foundation stones.

WALKING TOUR

Nancy continues to make corrections and additions to the list of historic buildings in the national register district, and found many slides of buildings along Main Street from 1987. Additions include the Grange/Baptist Church, Red Men Hall/Baptist Parsonage, Plain School House, Selah Norton House, Bronson/Mather/Henry store, Apple Inn, and the "Old Academy." The challenge will be to produce a document small enough to be easily carried around, yet large enough to include photographs and a legible text. Mollie recommends working on the text before trying to lay it out.

All agreed this will take more time than the Commission has prior to Fall Festival, and to work on it over the winter. Some copies of the existing walking tour could be made available at Fall Festival. Steve agreed to take new photographs of the buildings for the new brochure.

FALL FESTIVAL

The Commission looked at the foam core panels previously displayed at Fall Festival: the original three-panel, two-sided display of historic barns, and the three-panel presentations of the bell tower/stone bridge/barn project. Steve suggests using the barn triptych, putting the stone bridge panel on back of the middle panel, and adding a title panel (with the statement of the purpose of the Commission) on the back of the first (English barn) panel. Steve will enlarge AHC statement from annual report. Mollie has a large folding table that can be set up on the common; the driveway next to the Historical Society will be used again by the Agricultural Commission.

STONE BRIDGE

Markers along the trail that traverse Ray Gray's land were removed by him, but he states he is fine with **members of the Historical Commission** using the trail. He just doesn't want it marked. **The public trail has been realigned so it does not go on his property.**

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, September 27, at 7:30 pm.

Steve will contact Chris Skelly of MHC to find out when he would be available for a meeting with the Commission in late October or early November.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Respectfully submitted by Mollie Babize