

Ashfield Historical Commission
Meeting
Thursday, April 29, 2010

Present: Steve Gougeon, Mollie Babize, Nancy Garvin, Tristan Romer.

Meeting commenced at 7:41 pm

Minutes

Minutes of 25 March 2010 were approved, with corrections as noted by Nancy.

Terms

Steve noted in the Town Annual Report that Mollie's, Gerard's and Steve's terms are up in June 2010, and hopes everyone will be willing to continue for another three-year term. The Select Board must reappoint.

Barn Tour

No action since last month's meeting. It's likely not to happen until the fall. The Commission members continue to think a walking tour of town center barns has a great deal of appeal, and will meet Sunday, May 9th at 1:00 pm at Elmer's to look at barns in the area, take photos, and send this proposal to Jack Sobon. The one question is whether there is enough variety in age and style within walking distance.

Community Preservation Act

Mollie did not send a letter to the Planning Board, but did speak with Tom McCrumm about the issue. He agreed that many boards and commissions have expressed interest, but at this time there is nobody willing to take the lead. Dave Deherdt mentioned at the Candidates' Night he thought it might come up at Town Meeting, but there is no warrant article about it. The Select Board has asked to meet with the Board of Assessors after Town Meeting to discuss the CPA and its impact on Assessors.

Town Hall Committee

Before Town Hall can be used for Town Meeting, voting, and other town-wide events it must be made fully accessible. Nancy reported that Stuart Harris has been looking at ways to install a ramp to the front door from an accessible parking place. Because the parking must accommodate a van plus room to get in and out of the van, a 16' wide area is needed for parking, which makes entry through the side door impossible since there is not that much room between the building and the side property line. Wayne Gardner is looking at ways to design a handrail along the ramp. Tristan wondered whether access could be from the rear of the building, where the ground is higher. Mollie mentioned the Town Center Committee developed several sketches showing that option when advising the town on the purchase of the town common. Interior changes for accessibility to town hall include the height of counters, door width to rear offices, and generally providing more storage so the existing offices could be more spacious. Nancy showed sketches from the Space Needs Committee study a decade or so ago, exploring the option of excavating below Town Hall to create a larger basement. Mollie suggested that the Town Hall Committee find a local architect to explore options for the ramp.

Sanderson Class looking for historic sites to visit

Third grade teacher Carol Fisher is leading a number of field trips with her class, and wonders whether they might visit the old school house at Spruce Corner. The Commission

agreed that would be a great visit. Steve's son is in that class, and he will accompany them. Other possible sites include the stone bridge and several cemeteries in town.

Walking Tour

Nancy handed out a sheet showing historic sites of note in the Beldingville area, based on the Ellis genealogy. The information is very detailed, and Mollie wondered how to take all this historic data and distill it in a form that will engage the non-historian resident. Since settlement was often based on the physical context – streams for power, elevated lands for prospect and protection, woodlands for building resources, etc – perhaps that would be a way to tie it into what people can see around them today.

Next meeting:

The Commission will meet again Sunday May 9th at 1 pm to view barns in the center of town. Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held Thursday, May 27, 2010, 7:30 pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mollie Babize.