

Whately Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2017

Meeting called to order at 5:00 pm.

All members present: Donna Wiley (chair), Susan Baron, Judy Markland, Alan McArdle, Darcy Tozier.

1. Minutes of the September meeting were approved unanimously
2. There was further discussion of the advisability and possible wording of a Scenic Byways bylaw which would be added to either town general bylaws or zoning board bylaws. It could assist the Planning Board in its evaluation of proposals put before it. It might also help people better appreciate the historical things they have. Documentary evidence was found for roads that have been designated as scenic roads including Chestnut Plain, North Street, Haydenville and Conway Roads. Donna reported on her discussions with Chris Skelly of the MHC. He says that the Historical Commission can recommend to the Planning Board changes to the existing scenic byways rules. These give the town the prerogative to change the existing scenic byways by recommending ways to preserve the character and visual appearance of town roads within their right of way in particular by means of changes in stone walls and trees.
3. We voted to recommend that River Road, Webber Road, Strippe Road and Poplar Hill Road be designated as additional scenic byways.
4. Donna will draft either an addition to the list of scenic roads or a new bylaw to strengthen the local reach of the existing state bylaw.
5. We discussed the changes that might occur to the two older school buildings in town – the Blue School at the end of Christian Lane and the Center School in the center of town. The Historical Commission will be informed of any RFP's that affect the use or sale of either building. In the event the building will be demolished, we would like to have copies of any measured drawings, photographs and other documentation that may exist of these buildings.
6. We discussed additions to and the correction of errors in the MACRIS listings of historic properties and areas in the town. Most towns report difficulties in adding to and correcting the listings for their town. Some towns have considerably larger resources (both volunteer and paid) for changing and adding to MACRIS listings. We discussed the advisability of using local knowledge on the part of home owners and the like to improve the quality of descriptions and history.
7. The next meeting of the Historical Commission was scheduled for November 28 at 5 pm.
8. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.