



TOWN OF WHATELY Whately, Massachusetts

Historical Commission

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Written correspondence should be addressed to:
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Minutes of the April 1, 2019 Meeting 5:30 pm, Whately Town Hall

Present: Donna Wiley, Judy Markland, Susan Baron, Darcy Tozier, Alan McArdle
The minutes of the February 25th meeting were approved.

Proposal for storage structure on Town Hall Property

Donna and Brian Domina have each been contacted by Adelia Bardwell concerning the possible construction of a storage building on town hall land in the center of town. The project is not yet fully defined. However, the existing Preservation Restriction may apply to any possible construction. The opinion of the Historical Commission was to wait until plans are more firmly defined and presented to the appropriate Town entities. At that point, the Historical Commission will produce an opinion on the issue.

Zoning Bylaw revisions for historic building reuse

The Planning Board is proposing changes to the Zoning Bylaws which will encourage reuse of historically important municipal, commercial and religious buildings which have been open to the public for at least 50 years. Prior to receiving a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals the applicant must ask the Historical Commission for a determination that the structure is "historically significant". The basis for evaluation will be as follows:

1. Is the exterior architecturally significant?
2. Is the structure of historical or cultural significance to the town?
3. Are any person(s) of local importance or any events of significance to the town connected to the structure?

Changes to the zoning bylaws will be presented at the April 30 Town Meeting for a vote by the town.

Archaeological Dig Sponsorship 250th anniversary

A Smith College student is conducting an archaeological dig at an abandoned house site on Poplar Hill Road on the Archibald MacLeish site in West Whately this spring. A permit has been issued by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The question from the Historical Society was whether this project would be of interest for the 250th town anniversary celebrations as an opportunity for volunteer participation. The Historical Commission, while supportive of the project, agreed that it would be finished too early to be of interest for the 250th anniversary.

program. However, the student should be invited to present her findings at an Historical Society event or as part of the 250th anniversary celebrations, if possible.

Further discussion by the Historical Commission concerned what kinds of projects might be of interest for the 250th anniversary celebration. An article by Peter Thomas concerning Indian Trails, Early Roads and landscape in Deerfield was suggested as a possible starting point for research guidelines. We also discussed acquiring additional information on the Whately pottery sites and the potters themselves, the old mill sites on the Westbrook River and other possibilities for historic research relevant to town history. These projects might be aided by volunteers, be recipients of grant money, and so on. Peter Thomas has expressed a willingness to work with the Smith student on her project. Alan will contact Peter for details about the project and other matters of interest to the town. Donna will contact Peter Stott at the MHC about access to the redacted map of mill sites appended to the West Whately National Historic District application.

Other Business

Another application for a marijuana growing facility in Whately from the Mustang Corporation is expected. It would be located on the David Graves Farm. No impacts are expected on structures or on sub-surface material. A standard letter will be sent from the Historical Commission when the application is made detailing the expected outcomes if structural changes are expected or if archaeological material is found.

Next meeting

The next Historical Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, May 14 at 5pm at Town Hall.:-

Respectfully submitted,

Alan McArdle