



TOWN OF WHATELY Whately, Massachusetts

Historical Commission

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MINUTES WHATELY HISTORICAL COMMISSION September 21, 2020

The Zoom meeting was called to order by Donna Wiley at 4:30 pm.

Present: Donna Wiley (Chair), Susan Baron, Judy Markland, Darcy Tozier, Alan McArdle

Agenda:

1. The minutes of the August 21 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. Marijuana Cultivation Application – The letters and maps provided by Berkshire Design Group for 7 River Road were reviewed by the committee. No obvious problems related to Historic Preservation were seen. An existing farmhouse will be left largely alone. Digging in the area is relatively minimal and impacts on prehistoric or historic sites are not anticipated. Donna will send a letter to Don Sluter, Chair of the Planning Commission, stating the Historical Commission has no jurisdiction in the project which adds the usual comment that the project must stop if prehistoric or historic period artifacts are found.
3. Historic Stone Walls Project - Alan summarized what was available. Reasonably high quality LIDAR data is available for all of Massachusetts which could be used to detect stone walls not visible to the naked eye. No readily available viewer of this data exists for Massachusetts though one does exist in New Hampshire (See <https://nhdes.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f4d57ec1a6b8414190ca0662456dffb0>). A friend who is affiliated with the UMass Geosciences Department plans to develop a publicly available viewer for Massachusetts LIDAR data. No completion date exists yet. Alan has been in touch with Scott Jackson of the Conservation Commission. who replied that no one has used the state LIDAR data yet, but there are Geographic Information Systems (GIS) courses and a master's program in GIS technology at the University of Massachusetts, which may offer a source of students interested in working on a stone wall project. Alan will follow up with Scott. Donna suggested we talk to nearby towns to see if there is any interest in a joint stone wall mapping project, if we decide to pursue this. She will contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission about their Survey and Planning grant program, as well as contacting the UConn faculty member who responded to her recent inquiry on the Mass Historic Preservation list serve. The Committee agreed that we should understand the potential uses of a map of Whately's historic stone walls before

undertaking such a project. We need a “scope of work” to figure out exactly what is needed and who would benefit. This will be helpful in justifying the project, finding students to work on it and figuring out the costs of doing a stone wall location project. Alan will follow up and try to make more contacts regarding LIDAR imagery and uses.

4. Scenic Roads – Donna provided some background on the history of scenic roads projects. In 2017, the Commission agreed to recommend adding River, Webber, Poplar Hill, and Strippe Roads to the existing list of scenic roads (Chestnut Plain including North Street, Conway and Haydenville Roads). Now that the Town’s scenic roads bylaw has been amended (although not yet approved by the state Attorney General), the Commission agreed to revisit this recommendation, with the possible addition of Long Plain Road. Committee members will drive the roads in question before returning to this subject at the October meeting.
5. Hidden History Project - Brief reports were provided by Alan McArdle on town boundary location and by Donna Wiley on former roads in town. Judy Markland discussed her research on old schools in town. Some concern was expressed about ensuring the project will be completed on time for the 250th celebrations. However, Susan reported that the town Board of Health is reluctant to allow large gatherings to occur in the town on the date proposed. This may delay completion of many projects until the fall of 2021.
6. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.
7. The next meeting will be Monday, October 19, 5:00 pm, using Zoom.