

Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2023

Present: Donna Wiley (Chair), Susan Baron, Allison Bell, Judy Markland, Alan McArdle

- Meeting called to order at 5:02 p.m.
- Minutes of December 19th meeting approved unanimously.
- Possible area form submission of North Street:
 - Benefits – Helps create a document of the history of the area that is accessible, provides a framework if one wants to go onto the national register. National Register listing provides grant eligibility and possible tax benefits, makes it harder for someone to put certain intrusive structures or infrastructure in area, helps mount resistance to an unwanted intrusion. Donna suggested that the Historical Commission could consider part of its responsibilities to educate people about the history of the town.
 - 10 houses between the Dingle and Hillside Dairy already have entries in MACRIS, as well as multiple entries for Quonquont (area listing and individual listings for specific structures) and Hillside Dairy; therefore, a lot of content regarding the area already exists, but not the entire area.
 - Historically, the area had dairy farms, hayfields, orchards. There were four dairy farms – one remains. Businesses included a tannery, distillery in the Dingle, Craft cider mill near the brook.
 - We would need to define the Area.
 - The campground is part of the Baronas property (Hillside Dairy), so should it be included?
 - Should it be defined by current property boundaries? To the Mill River on the east?
 - Is the Great Swamp a separate area?
 - Should Whately Glen and the structures on Glen Road be included? The property does go down to North Street. The group agreed it makes more sense to treat the Glen as its own area.
 - Wadham property (59 North Street) belonged to Ralph Farrick. There was a tobacco barn on the property and a mock covered bridge on a pond, logging trails. For a property such as that, we may be able to ask Dereka at the Historical Society to research whether there was ever a house.
 - Commission members are unsure when North Street was renamed from Chestnut Plain Road. Properties in Whately Center historic district evolved from expansive farms to

include more private homes and businesses, whereas North Street remained expansive farms longer.

- If we are to pursue this, Judy suggested that, to start, we should update the MACRIS entries for the listed properties.
- Next Steps: We should be prepared to virtually “walk down the street” to determine the properties of interest at our next meeting.
 - We should all read what is in MACRIS for North Street and work on updating forms for our own properties. Donna will share the information Dereka Smith has compiled.
 - We can share other entries with property owners and ask for input.
- Donna recommends we each visit the Historical Society website to see the updated 18th and 19th century genealogies. The 20th/21st century chapter is in progress.
- Indicators of likely archaeological sites:
 - Alan discussed the USDA survey that allows you to make your own map. We can identify soil types in Whately to produce reports. Alan is looking into linking this to properties in the assessors’ maps. Flats are well surveyed, hillsides less so.
 - Alan will draft a brief statement that describes high, medium, or low sensitivities for prehistoric sites.
 - We can send this information to the Planning Board, to inform people doing work about what to look out for and the likelihood they would encounter something.
- Planning Board has agreed we no longer have to write a letter for each application, requiring work to stop and notification be given if historical or prehistorical evidence is found while doing work on a property. This condition is being included in standard site plan approvals by the Planning Board.
- Donna noted that we do not have a Demolition Delay Bylaw in Whately. Group members agreed we should discuss whether we should recommend one. Judy noted this does not effectively address demolition by neglect.
- Next meeting is February 20. Donna proposed that we revisit North Street and identifying prehistoric sites at that meeting and consider Demolition Delays at a future meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.