



**TOWN OF WHATELY**  
Whately, Massachusetts

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Historical Commission

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**Minutes of the July 17, 2023 Zoom Meeting, 5 pm**

Meeting participants: Donna Wiley, chair, Susan Baron, Allison Bell, Judy Markland, Alan McArdle.

The revised minutes of June 19 were unanimously approved.

Center School Donna briefly discussed the comments which Michael Steinitz of the Mass. Historical Commission had made regarding the draft preservation restriction which had been sent MHC for their approval. Some of the requested information is already included in the draft and none of the comments seemed too onerous. Donna will incorporate the necessary changes and send to Brian Domina for review by town counsel.

North Street area form The group discussed a map showing a potential outline of the proposed new area (attached) which Judy had prepared. Heading north from Swamp Road on the east side of North St., the proposal is to use the full parcel for the first few lots but then use the Mill River as the eastern boundary and then to encompass the campground and Baronas' farm to the Deerfield line. On the west side of the road, the area would extend west far enough to encompass the Scott homes on the hill. Allison noted that some farms had land that wouldn't be included within these boundaries, and Judy said that the additional acres could be included in the narrative. It was agreed that this area seems to make sense and could be revised later if necessary. Judy will use this as the basis for the data sheet for the form.

Susan briefly discussed the responses she'd gotten to the letters sent out with area forms and Dereka Smith's house histories. It was agreed that she would send the comments to Dereka.

It was noted that many, if not most, of the building forms for the North St properties need updating. Judy noted that this needn't be done before the area form is completed and that they could be done piecemeal as time permits. She has volunteered to do the architectural history for the area form. Susan is updating the form for her house

Mapping archeologically-sensitive areas Alan reported on his research into mapping tools and conversation with Scott Jackson about mapping resources. (See notes attached.) MassMapper, the GIS-based successor to Oliver, has all the appropriate layers but at different scales, so they are difficult to stack. Scott Jackson indicated that, if a project were designed, it might be

possible to get some of the UMass students to undertake the work. Allison volunteered to try to combine the map layers, and she and Alan will coordinate.

The next meeting will be on August 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Markland

Proposed North Street area map:



## Discussion with Scott Jackson about mapping software and its uses

This is a summary of my discussion with Scott Jackson of both the Conservation Commission and a staff member at the University of Massachusetts. It also has a summary of some of the map research I have been doing.

I have been experimenting with the MassGIS system which is available at [MassMapper](#). This seems to be a successor or a development of the OLIVER GIS system. . It is possible to focus on a particular town (or some other geographical entity). You can pick many different layers which are available in the system. They even have Lidar shaded relief and elevation layers under the **Images** heading.

MassMapper has, I think, all the information available in the MACRIS system under the Cultural Resources heading. Under the heading **MassHistoric Commission**, there are inventory points and areas. It also has property parcels as well. That's where it opens for me.

Under the major heading **Physical Resources** in MassMapper, there is a long list of layer. For prehistoric sensitivity there are several categories we could find useful. Among these are **Soils, Surficial Geology, and topography/Contours**. Others may be useful as well, but the ones mentioned cover the subjects most used in identifying prehistoric sensitivity (distance to water, slope and soil quality. I have not yet explored all of them but under **soils** there is a layer called **Top 20 Soils: Slope by Category** that looks useful. In any case, clicking on one of the colored areas brings up a brief description of what it contains. For example, the dark olive green areas in East Whately are Windsor or Walpole type sandy loam with 0% to 3% slope.

Scott uses the same MassMapper online software that I have been playing with. He thinks of himself more as a consumer of information rather than a maker of maps. He will provide or seek information for the Conservation Commission when it's helpful. He is willing to help us find or interpret the information we find on a map. He thinks I've been moving in the right direction by using MassMapper as a source. Many things are displayed as layers there that could be useful to us.

It is possible to save/print images on the MassMapper screen. I have been having some difficulty keeping the scale fixed when I do this. This is largely because the MassMapper system is for viewing information on a screen and not so much for printing it. The scale available depends on how the layer was added to the system. In order to get around this issue, we would need to have access to, learn to use and pay for the GIS software that is capable of overcoming this issue, Alternatively, there is a GIS instruction program at UMass that produces people who can actually make these systems. The instructors are always looking for smallish but useful projects for these students to do. If we are interested, we can make a project description in which we explain our goals in the system we are trying to create (prehistoric sensitivity) so that someone can create it. Scott is willing to pass this on to the class instructors to try to attract some student who is interested. We could have a usable system by the end of this fall.

Alan McArdle  
7/17/23