



TOWN OF WHATELY

Whately, Massachusetts

Historical Commission

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Minutes of the January 17, 2022 Zoom Meeting, 5 pm

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

The meeting was opened at 5:05 pm.

The minutes of the December 29, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

The draft annual report authored by Donna was approved with thanks.

The Commission agreed to submit its traditional \$200 budget request to the town.

Allison briefly discussed revising the text of Whately's history on the town web site. She had originally intended to revise the initial paragraph to include the history of the indigenous peoples, but then found problems with the remaining text as well. A major issue is not understanding the intent of the piece – who it's aimed at and what they expect to gain by reading it. It was agreed that Allison Bell would investigate other towns' web sites to identify their focus.

We welcomed Zachary Fouser, a senior in the environmental conservation department at UMass, to share his work mapping stone walls in Whately, a class exercise he had undertaken. He chose Whately as research target because of its agricultural history and relative lack of urban development. His analysis utilized LIDAR images in a hillshade function, which provided shaded relief images. The map he produced segregated areas with a slope of less than 15° from those exceeding 15°. Within the shallower slope areas he focused on shapes with straight lines and/or 90° angles, which when too large for foundations he concluded were stone walls. He has not walked the area extensively and was unable to locate some of the roads that appear in his analysis.

The discussion focused on questions about his methodology and encouragement for him to explore the steeper areas where stone walls were used for livestock, especially sheep. He will share the GIS link with the Commission and Donna will discuss dates for a possible follow-up session with the Commission. He was thanked enthusiastically for sharing his work with us.

Susan requested a brief blurb about the Hidden History project that the 250th Committee might use in promoting the project. Donna agreed to provide it.

The next meeting will be on February 21 at 5pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Markland