

Heath Historical Commission  
Sawyer Hall, Monday, November 9, 2009  
Minutes

*Meeting called to order at 7:15*

*Present:* Margaret Freeman, Jan Carr, Eric Grinnell, Bill Lattrell, Nina Marshall

*Absent:* Carol-Anne Eldridge, Pegge Howland

*Review and approval of October 5<sup>th</sup> minutes*

Nina made a motion to approve the minutes, Jan seconded. Unanimous approval.

*Reports on assignments from last meeting*

Margaret and Eric went to the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Greenfield. After discovering the amount of time required to research titles, a decision was made for Margaret and Eric to jointly work on Eric's house. One works from present to past – the last page of the deed has the previous owners' book and page of their deed. IF the book and page are absent, one must go the Grantor/Grantee Index for the appropriate time period. Interestingly, the buildings are not mentioned in many of the deeds, only the parcel. Also, many of the deeds contain specifics and provisions, making them will-like in function and revealing lots of interesting tidbits. Knowing the right questions to ask about a property is a tremendous advantage, a reason to involve the present owners of properties to be inventoried.

Bill spoke with Peggy Sloan from the FCROG about Heritage Landscapes and Scenic Byways.

Heritage Landscapes - The past procedure was for the Historical Commission/Town to apply for the grant funding and the FCROG does all the necessary work. HOWEVER, due to state budget constraints, there is no longer funding available. That being said, we could still do the preparatory work on identifying Heritage Landscapes. Fort Shirley might be a good starting point. One point to mention is the fact that this status is merely a designation: It has no teeth.

Scenic Byways – Bill's understanding is that state-numbered routes cannot be Scenic Byways. Jan will ask Bob Viarengo about the Planning Board's past experience with this. If a road is voted in as a scenic byway, stonewalls and trees need permits to be removed. More exploration is needed in this area.

Oral Histories – Jan reported on what she learned from the oral history website, [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org), and the book, *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*. Basically, most of the information is common sense and courtesy, such as don't interrupt or don't force the person being interviewed to your viewpoint. Jan passed out a sample letter and release. Nina suggested that grant money may be available and also that her mother-in-law is a good source of information on this. A list should be developed prioritizing people by age and availability with Margaret Jones on top. Jan will ask Ruth Johnson if she would be interested in this project, as a dialogue of reminiscences might glean more than straight questions and answers. Bill will ask his son, Liam, about digital recorders.

*Discussion of Proposal for the way we work as a Commission*

Margaret's proposal of change to hold four meetings a year rather than once a month will give the commissioners more time to focus on specific area of interest. Rather than work solely on inventories, individuals may thus pursue self-chosen projects.

Bill made a motion to reconfigure Commission work. Nina seconded. Unanimous approval.

Bill made a motion to meet four times a year. Nina seconded. Unanimous approval.

*New Business*

The time and knowledge required to research and produce inventories for all the houses in town over fifty years old is formidable. Ways in which present owners of houses might become involved in the process were discussed. An article in the Herald will be planned for the February issue inviting those interested to a potluck at the Community Hall. There, the commissioners will present an overview of inventories and special areas of interest.

Nina informed us of the completion of Ed Calver's book, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Don Freeman, which now has an index! The Historical Society is planning a reading for sometime in December with the full support of the HHC behind this event.

*Date of next meeting:* The next meeting was scheduled for March 1, 2010 at the Community Hall to be followed by a potluck.

*Meeting adjourned at 8:40*

Respectfully submitted,  
Jan Carr