

**Heath Historical Commission
Sawyer Hall, March 26, 2012**

Minutes

Present: Margaret Freeman, Pegge Howland, Bill Lattrell, Christine Luis-Schultz, Nina Marshall

Absent: Carol-Anne Eldridge

Guest: Art Schwenger

The meeting was brought to order shortly after 7:00 PM, and began with four members being sworn in by Hilma Sumner. **MF will forward Christine Luis-Shultz's name to the Select Board for ratification so that she and Carol-Anne Eldridge may be sworn in at a later date.**

1. (MSP) Approval of Minutes for March 5, 2012. MF commended NM for boldfacing proposed action items in the minutes, and suggested we continue the practice in future.
2. Follow-up on Action items:

Historic District signage. NM contacted Bob Viarengo of the Planning Board who said there were indeed bylaws concerning road signage. MF checked the Heath bylaws, and found the following reference:

4.6.4 Off-Premises Signs. Off-premise signs are prohibited in the Town of Heath, with the following exceptions:

The only off premise signs permitted in the Rural Residential District shall be "Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs" and associated "trailblazing signs", as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works (MDPW) in the Rules and Standards for Tourist Oriented Directional Signing on Conventional Roads", MGL, Ch. 85 e 2. Such signs shall conform to both MDPW regulations and the following local regulation:

A Special Permit granted by the Planning Board shall be required as evidence of community approval for "trailblazing signs". Approval of Special Permit for "trailblazing signs" shall be subject to finding by the Planning Board that such signs will promote the public interest, will not endanger the public safety, and will be of such size, location and design as will not be detrimental to the neighborhood. The Planning Board shall have the authority to establish and amend rules and regulations pertaining to the design and placement of "trailblazing signs" within the Town of Heath.

MF assumed the Historic District signs would fall under the category of "Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs" but searched the relevant state law without success. (<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIV/Chapter85/Section2>) Kara Leistyna noted there seems to be no "Sect e 2" in the current Ch. 85 Sect 2 state law, in which no mention is made of "tourist-oriented" signs, but said she would keep checking and would forward our inquiry to the Planning Board. The Commission agreed that the proposed signs should be reduced in size to conform more closely with the Shelburne Falls sign. **NM will measure the SF sign for exact specifications.** It was also agreed that the Planning Board should be consulted when the proposed signs are finalized by the Commission. MF said she had not yet contacted the Highway Dept. re sign placement since it was too early in the procedure to do so. Hearing nothing further from A&E Signs, MF submitted the original estimate of \$1650 as a budget proposal to the Select Board and Finance Committee.

Stone Walls. MF is still in the process of seeking clarification from Margot Newton on police jurisdiction over stone walls on private and public lands in Heath, and **will report at the next meeting.**

Space Needs. MF checked the materials given to her by Del Viarengo. She found the Commission's copy of the Open Space and Recreation Plan for Heath that was published in April, 2004, and which includes information of potential use to the Commission in its work.

Historic District Extension. MF found the extra information on the Palmer-Hanney house in the public files, but nothing on the Dyer/Merrill house or the fairgrounds.

Pilot Program. Walt Gleason agreed to participate in the pilot program to create a model for educational workshops. BL found a digitalized map of the Gleason property, but could view it only (no way to download). **BL will keep checking on ways to do so.**

Website. **Christine Luis-Schultz will consult with Kara Leistyna on creating a page for the Commission based on the two page information she now has.**

3. Update on Community Center Storage Storage Shed. MF gave Eileen Tougas a copy of the March 5 minutes with our approval and recommendations for the proposed shed. Eileen has reported that the Select Board denied her request for funding.

4. Pilot Project: Developing Interview Questions. Before drafting an outline of topics and possible questions, the Committee discussed general guidelines and procedures. These included identifying the information we would want such as important records like dates and deeds, eliciting stories such as "who built the barn," ways of asking questions that would generate flexibility in responses, and our understanding that we should proceed by gathering as much as we could concerning families, houses & structures, and land use in order to develop strategies for general workshops. BL stressed the importance of creating a "good enough" model that would be replicable. Art Schwenger noted that there appear to be three sets of oral history tapes (some possibly overlapping) that have been done in the past: the tapes now being transferred onto DVD by the Heath Library, the Heath Elementary School's "Heath Heritage Project" (with a "Goals 2000" grant) that documented several oral histories in video (see Open Space and Recreation Plan, page 23), and cassette tapes in a cardboard box that Lynn Perry and Helen Mackie were involved with (Art also mentioned Mike Chrisman and Michael Klein in this connection). This box has not been located, but **PH will look in the Historical Society collection to see if it may have been deposited there.**

The Committee then spent time brainstorming topics and questions for the Walt Gleason pilot program. **MF will prepare an outline from the flipchart and send it around for comments and modifications.** Further discussion included NM's suggestion for also creating a questionnaire that could capture some of the factual information (like date of house). It was thought we might have two such lists, one short and one somewhat longer to accommodate interviewees' preferences. The Committee also discussed the need to be sensitive to

interviewees' comfort zones by having only two people conduct each interview, one of whom would be someone well-known to and liked by the interviewee. Art Schwenger was suggested as the obvious person to be chosen for Walt Gleason's interview. We will also need to have video recording equipment for the interviews. MF pointed out that we probably won't be funded for such an expenditure at the outset this year, but we could at least use more inexpensive equipment for the pilot, with the understanding that we should later upgrade if needed. **BL will check out the feasibility and costs of video trail cameras.**

5. Next meeting. May 7th is set for the next meeting. It was decided to change the meeting time to 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. The main agenda item for that meeting will be finalizing the information on procedures and questions for the pilot project.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Freeman