

**Webster Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes, October 23, 2021**

A meeting of the Webster Historical Commission was held on Saturday, October 23, 2021 in the Local History Room of the Gladys E. Kelly Library located at 2 Lake Street, Webster, MA.

Present: Chairman Ted Avlas, Vice Chairman Curtis Cleaves, Clerk Elaine Davies, and Members Judy Keegan and Reanna Kuzdzal.

Also Present: Ann Morgan, Director of Planning & Economic Development

1. Call to Order. Mr. Avlas called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

2. Action Items

- a. Draft Meeting Minutes - August 24 and September 28, 2021 - tabled to next meeting.
- b. Membership: Mr. Avlas noted that the Selectmen had taken action on the Commission's request to vacate the appointment of Kelly Baldarelli. The Selectmen voted to dismiss her on the basis of lack of participation. The Commission now has two vacancies to fill.

3. Workshop

- a. Overview for New Members: An overview of the June 26, 2021 workshop was provided for the newest members. The earlier workshop spent time focusing on resources and partners. The Commission spent some time further adding to the previous list of resources and potential partnerships as follows:
 - American Association for State and Local History
 - State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) - Veteran's Heritage Grant possibly for the reconstruction of the World War II Observation Station, other grants
 - Janet Malser Humanities Trust grants
 - Local Cultural Council grants
 - Community grants from local banks or businesses - Bank Hometown, Webster Five Foundation, Mapfre
 - State Agencies such as Massachusetts State Archives, Massachusetts Archives Digital Repository
 - Federal Resources such as Library of Congress, National Archives
 - Statewide or Regional Historical Resources such as Massachusetts History Alliance, Historic New England (previously Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities), Boston Athenaeum, Worcester Historical Museum Library and Archives
 - Local Historical Resources such as Webster Dudley Historical Society, Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library
 - Digitized Resources - Webster Times
 - Online Resources such as oldwebster.com
 - Local History experts with general or subject specific knowledge of the history of the Town such as Carla Manzi, Paul Macek, Jim Morrison, John Mrazik (trains), Barbara Tucker
 - Samuel Slater Experience
 - Local and Regional Colleges such as Nichols College, Eastern Connecticut State University

b. **Brainstorming Public Education and Outreach Opportunities:** The Commission agreed that educating the public through a variety of outlets was essential to broaden the Town's understanding of its historic resources and to prevent further loss of resources. Some ideas included:

- Working with the schools - curriculum connections
- Regular press releases from the Commission
- Promoting Webster History Day
- History Tours / Walking Tours - Maps, Guides, Events
- Patch Program - self guided program
- Historic Building Plaque Program
- Work with Library to continue building resources and digitizing of material in the Local History Room
- Outreach to Property Owners
- Outreach to Business Owners
- Outreach to key local Boards i.e. Board of Selectmen, Planning Board
- Advocacy through the Board of Selectmen - in person quarterly project updates
- Develop a compendium / bibliography of local resources

c. **Architectural and Historic Survey Update - MHPP FY 23 Survey & Planning Grant** - It was noted that Town Meeting had approved the warrant article of \$25,000 out of the stabilization fund for the Commission to apply for the grant. The Commission discussed two options for grant application - update the existing surveys or prepare a preservation plan. Jenn Doherty of the Massachusetts Historical Commission had provided Mr. Avlas with some examples of preservation plans completed in other communities. It was decided that the best option would be to use the money to develop a preservation plan. Mr. Avlas and Ms. Morgan were directed to reach out to MHC to discuss both options prior to preparing the pre-application letter of intent. Mr. Avlas noted that the letter of intent was due on or before November 15, 2021. Other issues discussed included:

- Obtaining a list of other communities who have recently prepared preservation plans so that the Commission can begin to structure out a scope of services in the event that MHC invites the Town to apply for the full grant.
- Start to prepare a list of potential work items to be included in the scope of services. Should mapping all historic properties in GIS be considered? Should the consultant include tasks identified as "Recommended for Further Study" in the 2000 survey?
- Prepare a master database of all properties in the 1979 and 2000 surveys and identify those which have been demolished since then.
- Explore funding resources.
- Identify a list of consultants who are qualified to prepare a preservation plan.

d. **Next Steps**

- Next regular meeting: November 23, 2021 via remote participation.

- Mr. Avlas and Ms. Morgan to reach out to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to discuss options relating to the MHPP FY 23 Survey & Planning Grant pre-application letter of intent.
- Mr. Avlas and Ms. Morgan to prepare and submit pre-application letter of intent - due by 11/15/21.
- Ongoing content management, database development and digital organization of the 1979 and 2000 Architectural Survey documents by Ms. Morgan,

5. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 via remote participation.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting and workshop made by Ms. Keegan, seconded by Mr. Cleaves. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0 by roll call vote (Mr. Cleaves – AYE; Ms. Davies – AYE; Ms. Kuzdzal – AYE; Ms. Keegan – AYE; Mr. Avlas – AYE). The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Morgan, Recording Secretary

EXHIBITS - none.

