Groton Historical Commission- Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2024

Groton Town Hall

7:00 PM

1. Meeting was called to order by Aubrey Theall (Chair) at 7pm.
2. July minutes were approved as presented by unanimous vote.
3. Allen King was recognized for his ~14 years of service to the Town of Groton as Historical Commissioner, this being his last meeting. The Commission wishes Allen all the best.
4. Prescott House Updates
   1. 18 month demo delay clock continues to tick toward November 2024. Time is running out. At this point there are no parties with a viable plan to move the house, project costs have been prohibitive.
   2. The $8,000 needed to LIDAR scan the Prescott House has been raised, this project will move forward.
   3. Prospective press release will move forward as drafted.
5. CPC project updates (mile marker restoration, Bancroft Castle study). Richard Nason is interfacing with monument company regarding the mile markers. The Bancroft Castle study contract has been executed and that project is getting of the ground.
6. Historical plaque pilot program updates, new applications. Allen King has applied for a historical marker for his home at 118 Hollis St., application was approved as presented by unanimous vote. Deborah Burton was present at the meeting, inquired about a plaque for her home, Joshua Vollmar and Tom Horsman to assist. Two other applications are in flight.
7. Michael Danti updated the Commission in regards to the project to clean the Boutwell family grave markers in the cemetery. Michael connected with Don Black who authorized the cleaning. It will move forward when we have a period with no rain (necessary for the chemicals to work properly). Spot testing will be done to ensure no ill effect on the monument stone, none expected. Plantings may need to be moved.
8. Groton Master Plan discussion. Joshua Vollmar presented a number of proposed objectives for the historic preservation portion of the Master Plan including:
   1. Increasing public awareness of/engagement with local history.
   2. Signage related to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.
   3. Placing local historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places.
   4. Improved protections for historic buildings.
   5. Possibly expanding the historic districts working with the Historic District Commission.
   6. Closing the loophole in the demolition delay bylaw related to offering structures to be moved in lieu of offering them for sale.
   7. Continue to steward historic monuments.
   8. Make local history more accessible by highlighting overlooked history and making more information regarding pre-colonial history available (with approval from indigenous constitutents).

A vote was taken to proceed with including the above objectives in the Master Plan, the vote passed unanimously.

1. Preservation/digitization of historical materials. Gus Widmayer unable to attend the meeting and update, pushed to September.
2. Old Meetinghouse updates. Allen King related that air conditioning may be added via. a mini split system.
3. Any topics not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting. Destination Groton may seek grant funding for historical signs or markers related to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and may seek to work with the Historical Commission on this. Will be discussed at next meeting.
4. New business (none).
5. Next meeting scheduled for September 11, 7pm.
6. Adjourn.