Groton Historical Commission- Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2024

1. Meeting was called to order by Aubrey Theall, Chair, at 7:02pm. Commissioners Joshua Vollmar, Tom Horsman, Gus Widmayer, Richard Nason and Associate Commissioner Amanda Chang present.
2. Aubrey Theall updated the Commission regarding recognition by the Select Board for Allen King's service.
3. Aubrey Theall raised the issue of filling the vacancy created by Allen's resignation, recommended Amanda Chang be recommended to the Select Board. Motion was made and seconded to that effect, approved by unanimous vote. Aubrey Theall to notify the Town Manager.
4. Anna Eliot joined as a guest and recommended that the Commission sponsor a CPC application to commission a professional study and report of the history and significance of the Prescott family to the Town of Groton. There was discussion of this topic with Joshua Vollmar pointing out that he has done extensive research on the Prescott family, much of which has been published. Aubrey Theall pointed out that this research has not previously been pulled together into one comprehensive document but that it could be. Greg Sheldon (guest) suggested that some form of documentary be created using this information. Gus Widmayer asked if preservation funding for the Prescott House could be included, this is not possible without the cooperation of the property owner and they previously have indicated they will not cooperate. After some discussion Gus Widmayer made a motion that the Historical Commission prepare a CPC grant application for:

"A historical study of the significance of the Prescott Family in the Town of Groton, to include an aggregation of all available information and possibly to include some form of documentary or other educational presentation related thereto". This motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote. Aubrey Theall will prepare the initial CPC application.

1. Greg Sheldon joined as a guest representing Destination Groton seeking support for a grant application that would install historical markers and fund other educational initiatives related to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in Groton. He provided a copy of a grant application and a sample letter of support which he requested that the Commission sign. A motion was made and seconded, approved by Aubrey Theall, Tom Horsman, Gus Widmayer, Richard Nason with Joshua Vollmar abstaining due to a conflict of interest owing to his involvement in the project. Aubrey Theall to sign and return the letter.
2. Prescott House updates: Demo permit will have to be issued in November. LIDAR scanning to occur in late September. Anna Eliot suggested that the Commission deny the demolition permit at the end of the demo delay. Aubrey Theall responded that he did not believe that the Commission had the authority to do so but that he would seek advice of Town Counsel.
3. Active CPC project applications:
   1. Bancroft Castle- Field work starting this week. Hope to have enough information to seek a CPC grant in the next cycle for preservation work, if not it would push to the next cycle.
   2. Historical mile marker project- one of the two stones cannot be located but may be there due to growth of vegetation. Aubrey Theall to see if Highway Department can clear vegetation. If not we'll wait for leaves to fall and look again.
4. Boutwell family monuments in the cemetery were cleaned by Michael Danti. Photos were circulated and the results appear excellent. Michael Danti will provide a report in the future.
5. Groton Master Plan- No discussion this month.
6. Preservation/digitization of historical materials. Gus Widmayer has circulated costs for cloud storage. There was discussion of whether or not this was a hardware or a cloud solution. It was pointed out that CPC does not like funding ongoing "maintenance" expenses but that funds for this could be raised through other sources, perhaps. More discussion is needed with the Library. It was determined that the Historical Commission should seek a CPC grant to pay for a consultant to advise as to the best course of action and what hardware, if any, should be purchased.
7. There was a brief discussion of the loss by fire of the Herb Lyceum, 368 Main St. Unfortunately the carriage house was a total loss. Cleanup of the site was authorized on an emergency basis by the Commission (as well as other Town departments) to allow them to maintain business operations to the maximum possible extent.
8. Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting: A demo permit application has been received for 91 Gratuity Road. As this was received the day prior it cannot be voted on at this meeting. A one-off Zoom meeting will be posted for a vote.
9. New business (none).
10. Next meeting scheduled for October 16 at 7pm.
11. Adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:54pm.