Groton Historical Commission- Minutes

December 18, 2024

7pm – Groton Town Hall

1. Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:02PM. Commissioners Aubrey Theall, Joshua Vollmar, Thomas Horsman, Gus Widmayer, Richard Nason and Amanda Chang in attendance.
2. November minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.
3. Discussion of historical monuments/markers. Jim Desrosiers in attendance. There was a discussion of historical markers related to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and more generally markers for historic sites. Joshua Vollmar is working on walking tours in conjunction with Destination Groton. There is an agreement among the Commission that some form of expansion of historic markers around town is desirable, in order to better tell the story of the history of Groton. There is a desire to make historic signage more uniform. Will require standards and changes to the sign bylaw.
4. 171 Lowell Road discussion. DPW Director Tom Delaney reached out and expressed an objection to the movement of the horse watering trough. Question is of ownership of the trough which sat within the boundaries of the public way for many years. HistComm is not able to locate any historical material that would indicate who owns the trough. Should be discussed with Town Counsel should the Town wish to press the matter further. There was a discussion of a potential future bylaw change to make Historical Commission a party to discussions involving old structures or items in the public way.
5. Prescott House update. House has been salvaged by Hartland Restoration of PA. Virtually everything of historical significance has been saved. Another house in PA will be salvaged and the combined components used to construct a house in PA by the owner of Hartland Restoration (which he will occupy). His property contains several other historic structures that have been relocated to the site. There is disagreement among the Commission as to whether or not salvage is viewed as a partial success and how to communicate this to the public.
6. FY25 funded CPC project updates:
   1. Bancroft Castle- Report is expected by 12/20.
   2. Historical mile marker project. Update on broken marker replacement and location of uprooted marker.
7. FY26 CPC funding cycle application update:
   1. Bancroft Castle (report due in on 12/20, Aubrey Theall to work on draft application following receipt).
8. Discussion of improving/tightening Groton's demolition delay bylaw. MA Historical Commission has offered to attend one of our meetings to discuss, we will take them up on this.
9. Prescott Common, discussion of how better to feature the Prescott monument in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the USA.
10. Historical Plaque Program.
    1. Sign bylaw revisions. Aubrey Theall and Joshua Vollmar to attend a future sign committee meeting.
11. Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting (none).
12. New business (none).
13. Adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:34pm.