

Merrimack Heritage Commission
Meeting Minutes - April 15, 2024

Attendance: Heritage Commission – John Frechette, Lon Woods, Finlay Rothhaus
Guests – John Lastowka (Historical Society), Chuck Mower (Historical Society),
Rick Price (Historical Society)

1905 hrs: Meeting called to order by John Frechette

1905 hrs: Review and approval of prior minutes

- The minutes from the January meeting were presented. Motion to approve the minutes. 2 to accept, 1 abstain. Motion carried.

1908 hrs: Thornton Cemetery

- John F advised that Paul Micali approved of Ellen Brinker’s bronze plaque and granite block marker for Hannah Jack-Thornton’s gravesite. Paul advised that if the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence (DSDI) wanted to hold an unveiling ceremony, they would need to notify the Town Council.
- The Sons of the American Revolution also wished to place markers in Thornton Cemetery and hold a ceremony this spring. I advised that the Heritage Commission is in full support. Paul Micali has not heard back from them yet.

1915 hrs: Signage

- John F. advised of an ongoing project to erect signage at historic Merrimack sites: 12 Schoolhouses, 5 Fire stations, and 4 Train stations. We still need to contact sign manufacturers to obtain estimates of the cost of the proposed signs. No follow-up has been done on this project.
- John L. advised that there are 13 Schoolhouses. He helped move one from further up the road to the Congregational Church on Boston Post Road. The old schoolhouse sits in the center of the current building.
- Chuck advised the Old Dunstable sign that used to sit at Citizens Bank was moved to Watson Park, out of the ‘Old Dunstable’ region. It should be returned to its correct region, and a new sign should be erected for the Narragansett 5 region, also known as Souhegan East. This sign should be in Watson Park.

1935 hrs: Granite Incorporated Signs

- John F. continued discussing the granite ‘Incorporated in 1750’ signs at Watson Park and the Town Hall. The second incorporation date confuses residents, and the granite signs should be corrected. The first incorporation date, 1746, is on the Town Seal.
- Chuck stated that the two granite signs sit in the town area that was incorporated in 1750, so the date on the signs is correct.

- Chuck advised that a ceremony regarding the second Incorporation is planned for June 1, at 10:00 a.m., at the Depot Street launch.
- Lon advised that the original discussions and debate over the date on the signs lasted 18 months.
- John F advised that he has been in contact with several granite monument companies. They have a process for restoration using resin and granite chips, but the resin yellows, and the repair remains visible. It is recommended that a portion be replaced with a different shade of granite. Pictures and measurements will be forwarded for quotes. A vote by the Town Council would be required for approval. Proposals for the Town Council are to follow.

1935 hrs: Reeds Ferry Landing

- John F advised there is a large oak tree on the property that we are seeking to have designated as a New Passaconaway Tree with a potential walking trail and potential for a town park. He spoke with Highway Director Dawn Tuomola, who advised that fixing the canoe launch area is on her list of projects, but she cannot access the area with appropriate equipment. If equipment can get through, it could be used to blaze a trail.
- Chuck advised that the Native American Coalition should be involved.

1950 hrs: Round Table Discussion – John Cromwell Bridge

- Chuck stated that the construction company and the town are doing a great job on the John Cromwell Bridge project. It is a great asset to the town.
- Lon expressed concern that after all the value and appreciation that is going into the bridge, the State may come in a red flag as unsafe.
- John L advised that the civil engineer told him that the bridge could be rebuilt block by block for stability. He also advised that informative signs are planned for the canal walkway under the bridge. Tuomola has a copy of the sign plans. He was given permission to enter the job site and has been documenting the construction through photos and video. The project is currently scheduled for completion in August.

2015 hrs: Meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: May 20, 2024