



# TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Historical Commission

### Meeting Minutes

**Date: Oct. 11, 2023**

**Location: In person and Microsoft Teams Meeting**

#### Call to Order

Having a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM.

#### In Attendance

Committee Members:

- Craig Weinfuss – Chair – PRESENT - virtual
- Katherine Worsham - Co-Chair – PRESENT
- Joan Burrell - Treasurer - PRESENT
- Edward Phillips - Secretary - PRESENT
- Donna Kempton – Not PRESENT
- Patrick Rosendale – PRESENT
- Russell Wood – PRESENT
- 1 guest present
- 1 guest virtual

#### Discussion

##### Agenda –

- 1.) Minutes from September and October meetings
  - A motion was made to approve the minutes of both meetings, seconded and approved unanimously.
  - Craig thanked Katherine and Donna for attending Heritage Day event. Katherine reported many people checked out our display and were pleased with several of our items.
  - Joan reported the brochure listed Upton's Cave is rated number two in Massachusetts.
- 2.) The treasurer reported she received no update from the town accountant regarding our funds. Same as last month.
- 3.) Update on letter to the DCR concerning the North Barn etc. Ed reported walking tour of CCC camp was cancelled due to rain. Ed will reach out to Bill Taylor to get a reschedule date.
- 4.) Heritage Park sign – BVT picked up the old sign last Friday to begin the reconstruction.
- 5.) Discuss creating SOP to document historical properties before any possible demolition might take place. Craig reached out to the MHC and was put on *Listserv*. He also talked to two individuals from Andover who said they use Form B to list their properties. Craig will confirm it's the correct form and will check with the MHC.

- Valerie in the town treasurer's office reported there are about 1350 historical properties.
- 6.) Send a letter to the CPC allowing prior funds for historic documentation be allowed to expire. Paul with the CPC told us we can ask for funds for this purpose anytime we need to in the future. Craig will email Paul and notify him the issue was discussed and that no funds have been used for the past five years.
- Ed suggested we consider searching for companies or individuals to help document other historic properties in town. He believes only 187 properties have been documented, Upton Center District, Upton North District, West Upton District.
  - Ed also stated it might be a time to attempt to seek town approval for a historical district. Russ said it didn't pass because it was too big in the past so maybe we should scale it back.
  - A resident suggested we approach the schools to see if they have individuals in their media departments that could assist with documentation.
  - Patrick suggested an education effort concerning what constitutes a historic district would be helpful, either a cheat sheet or a simple video. Also we should consider an effort to let people know the difference between the Historic Society and the Historical Commission. This might be a useful guide for people looking to come to Upton as to whether their house is in a historical district or not.
  - Catherine pointed out that the difficulty in getting a historic district passed might be a different effort today than it was thirty years ago. She also suggested we could add a FAQ to our website to address several of these issues.
  - Patrick asked if new residents to town receive a folder brochure with phone numbers, contacts, list of areas of interest. Russ added that maybe 15 years ago this was done but not now.
  - A suggestion was made we make a video and put it on YouTube so people searching for Upton would find it.
  - Craig will add this item to next months agenda for further discussion.
  - Craig will email the warrant article from the 1990s regarding a historic district to the commission members.
- 7.) Discuss setup of cloud storage box
- Craig created a site at UptonHistoricSociety.com. Oops, he will correct it to UptonHistoricalCommission.com.
  - This site to be used to hold our documentation.
  - Options suggested are Drop Box, Google Drive, One Drive. Ed and Patrick added that Dropbox is more user friendly than the others.
  - Craig explained we could keep all of our common forms, flyers, folders, etc. on this site for the availability of all members.
  - Catherine suggested we might want to check on document security.
  - We should check with Denise about the security issue before voting on proceeding with this.
  - Craig will put this on next month's agenda for further discussion.
- 8.) Check mail for the commission on a bi-monthly basis.
- Joan will check the box this month and we will ask for a volunteer each month
- 9.) Paving route 140
- Letter received from MassDOT asking if the commission wanted to respond in any fashion.
  - Joan pointed out the granite curbs around the common are historic.
  - Craig read the letter to the group – 6.2 miles of repaving in two segments, Elm to Hopedale town line and Williams Street to Grafton. The project included grinding and repaving with some sidewalk rebuild on the Grafton end.
  - Ed proposed we send a letter saying we see no concerns with the repaving project. Craig to respond.
- 10.) Two warrant article – article XI - action to lease Knowlton Risteen building

- It is not stated in the warrant but believed the intentions are to lease the first floor leaving the Historic Society on the second floor. Our concern that the language is too vague and does not protect the Historic Society Museum.
  - It was suggested we contact the selectman to ask for language that protects the Historic Society Museum's space in the building. Craig to send an email to the town managers office to ask for a language change.
- 11.) Warrant Article X – funding for exterior maintenance of KR and Holy Angels for the sum of \$200,000.
- Several members expressed their support for this effort.
  - Joan made a motion for favorable action for the funding this article. Ed abstained, Patrick abstained, Catherine yes, Russ yes, Joan yes, Craig yes. Article passes by majority.
- 12.) Discuss special meeting minutes related to 40B apartment on Main St.
- Historic Society held a special meeting on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> and stated:
    - It will disrupt the historical look of the downtown due to the size
    - It will impact negatively flooding in the area
    - A trolley used to pass through this property suggesting there may be some historical value
  - Cathy Taylor suggested there may be astrological alignments of the stone walls on the property. Craig will draft a letter to Michael Antonellis related to these concerns or issues.
  - Joan suggested the developer be asked to pay for experts to come in and map out the walls, etc. on the property, but doesn't feel the structures or walls are significant.
  - Craig showed the commission a map of the property with the alignment of the walls.
  - Craig said there is an old well on the property.
  - A resident stated the property between the Grange and the 47 Main Street property is a flood plain according to FEMA.
  - Catherine reported she has already sent out a letter on the Commission letterhead based on last week's meeting.
  - A resident submitted a map from MACRIS showing part of the 40B property is listed on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places.
  - Catherine reported the Upton Center Historic district was added to the National Register in 2015 after speaking to a Rustin Quade a representative of the National Register. It does not show on their website, but they will confirm its listing if you call them. They said they show it in their inventory as a redacted listing and you can't see the full listing unless you call them and convince them you are a qualified researcher.
  - The Upton Center District, the CCC Camp, the Town Hall and the Hat factory are listed on the National Register.
  - Sue Gary, 24 Hazeltine Rd, - a sign near 47 Main after the elementary school says you are entering the Historic District. Catherine and Russ reported the Commission put those signs up about 2018 or so. There are 4 signs placed as you enter the historic district.
- 13.) Update on Grange
- Ed reported there has been little progress since last month. The architect has agreed to finish the bid specs by end of October and resubmit to the state for final approval. The state will not send the contract to the Grange until the bid specs are finalized.
- 14.) Social media update
- Patrick reported not much change but expressed his concern that there is a lot of misinformation on social media especially with the war in the middle east.
- 15.) 300th Anniversary update – no update
- 16.) Items not anticipated in advance
- Ellen preparing an educational program. She is currently gathering information.
    - This is an effort to get younger individuals engaged in our town and our history.

- Ellen to present at the November meeting
- 17.) CMRPC may have grant monies available for cemetery preservation and other areas of historical research. They have \$10,000 available. Craig feels we should apply for this for use possibly for the KR and Holy Angels to show the town we are making an effort to preserve our historical infrastructure.

## **Meeting Adjourned**

Joan made a motion to adjourn, Russ seconded, motion to adjourn was passed at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ed Phillips  
Secretary