

TOWN OF AMHERST
Heritage Commission

February 9, 2023

APPROVED

In attendance: Will Ludt – Chair, Conor Frain, Lisa Montesanto, Gordon Zuerndorfer, Linda Zuerndorfer, Brenda Perry, and Tom Grella – Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio
Staff in attendance: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote)

1. Roll Call to Order

Will Ludt called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Will Ludt explained that in 2013 there was an attempt to get Walnut Hill Road listed as a scenic road, which failed. Last night, at Deliberative Session, there was an attempt to get Christian Hill Road designated as a scenic road, which also failed. It appears that some property owners were concerned that there is a Planning Board amendment proposed which will place more restrictions on scenic roads.

Lisa Montesanto stated that designating a road as scenic is not infringing on anyone's rights; it is simply adding a couple of steps to preserve stone walls. This adds a bit of extra legwork to the Town, DPW, Eversource, etc., to work on areas near stonewalls.

Will Ludt noted that all homeowners along Christian Hill Road received a letter from the Town regarding the citizen's petition. The Heritage Commission was asked to help with this petition.

Lisa Montesanto explained that public education needs to be better on this topic. She noted that people do not understand the Deliberative Session process. A proposal can be wiped out on the floor of Deliberative Session with just a couple of people in opposition.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

2. "Throw Back" Thursday – Amherst Heritage

None at this time.

3. Status of Discussions with Camp Young Judaea

Gordon Zuerndorfer stated that he chatted with a gentleman who acts as the Camp Young Judaea historian. He noted that some of the history included pictures of the first two prime ministers of Israel, before the state of Israel was established. He noted that arms apparently were brought to the Camp and then mailed out to Israel.

Brenda Perry stated that the Amherst Historical Society was interested in doing an article about Camp Young Judaea. Will Ludt noted that he would like the Heritage Commission to take the lead on this item. The Commission could consider meeting with the Historical Society on this topic.

Gordon Zuerndorfer noted that there was apparently a piece on Camp Young Judaea done by New Hampshire Chronicle. He has contacted the Chronicle to try to obtain this story.

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4. Heritage Plans for 2023 – Looking Ahead

Will Ludt asked the Commission what its ideas and goals are for 2023. This could include visiting local landmarks, seeking grants, completing the Camp Young Judaea history project, etc.

Tom Grella suggested a presentation on the mineral spring that used to exist on Spring Road. There was discussion regarding placing a marker at the site and placing information about it on the Commission's website. Tom Grella noted that this location is approximately 200' off the road and located on private property.

Regarding the Corn Crib cooperage, Will Ludt noted that DPW Director Eric Slosek had a contractor review the building and asbestos was found. The intention is to remove this and make the building environmentally safe before demolishing it.

Will Ludt noted that the Commission signed up to be trail stewards and needs to keep up that responsibility. He stated that the Master Plan discusses the metal detecting policy; the Commission may want to keep up with that and consider a demolition delay policy. Tom Grella noted that there is already a Town-wide demolition delay policy.

Tom Grella noted that the Milford Rotary is celebrating their 75th year in 2025 and wants to do something to celebrate the four towns involved: Amherst, Mont Vernon, Milford, and Wilton. The group is looking for citizen ideas that may require funding. The group recently purchased a Zamboni that is used at the ice rinks at Amherst Middle School and tennis courts in the Village.

Will Ludt suggested that the Commission could meet with the Board of Selectmen to consider project ideas to bring to the Milford Rotary. He noted that Massachusetts towns are looking to celebrate the 250th anniversary of 1776. He asked the group to consider what Amherst could do for this.

Conor Frain suggested another Commission field trip to the Space Force Station to see the aircraft crash sites. He also suggested that the Commission could do a project at Buck Meadow to commemorate Ponemah Station. This could include some signage or a kiosk with information. He also suggested signage regarding the history of Bragdon Farm. Lisa Montesanto suggested that this could be coordinated with the Conservation Commission, as they may already have a kiosk located at Bragdon Farm.

Conor Frain stated that there are a number of Town histories that are no longer being compiled. He suggested that the Commission's website could be used as a place for people to submit stories and/or photos in order to better compile them. Will Ludt agreed that more needs to be done to publicize the Commission's website.

Will Ludt noted that he has been seeking photos of the old Baboosic Lake Railroad Station for years. He stated that the Commission collectively needs to do a bit more publicity for the group. Many people do not even know the Commission exists.

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Linda Zuerndorfer suggested doing an event in conjunction with the Library, as their events usually draw a large crowd. Brenda Perry noted that the Library also allows for exhibits from local groups.

Will Ludt noted that the Conservation Commission seems to be receiving a number of donations lately. He commented that he would like it if the Heritage Commission could receive some similar donations.

Gordon Zuerndorfer suggested that walks to local interest points could be open to the public and flyers could be handed out.

Conor Frain suggested that any materials reclaimed from the cooperage could be used for a fundraiser, such as reclaimed wood, hoops, etc.

Gordon Zuerndorfer noted that there could be a potential to get grant funding towards informational talks or webinars hosted by the Commission. Will Ludt suggested that members of the Commission could also consider presenting at a high school AP History class.

Gordon Zuerndorfer moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm. Seconded by Conor Frain.

Vote: 7-0-0; all in favor.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*

Minutes approved: March 9, 2023