

Montague Historical Commission
Minutes/Summary of the MHC meeting of July 31, 2023

Montague Town Hall
1 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA.

Meeting held on-line 11:00-12:06

Commissioners present:

David Brule, Chair
Ed Gregory
Janel Nockleby
Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno
Not attending: Chris Clawson

Also attending:

Walter Ramsey
Maureen Pollock

Proceedings:

1. WR and explanations re demolition of former Cumberland Farms building.
 - a. This building listed as an “intrusion” i.e a recent building not reflecting architectural style or detail of this historical area. Such recent buildings of the 50s and 60s having no style that reflect this conformity.
 - b. A map exists of other “intrusions”. The Historical Commission requests a copy of this map.
 - c. DB remarks that when the Grand Trunk was torn down, numerous historical colonial and Indigenous artifacts were found and have been catalogued; a copy of the archaeology report on file in the Carnegie Library.(Written by David Nasany and Mitch Mulholland)
 - d. CS-L: should Section 106 be applied? WR: No federal funds or permits involved; the demolition permit was reviewed and approved by local building inspector.
 - e. The ground has already been highly disturbed. There will be no excavation. The foundational slab will be removed.
 - f. Area will be loamed and reseeded. Start-up date not yet determined.
2. Further MHC questions for WR:
 - a. Millers Falls Rd worksites; considerable ground disturbance in archaeologically sensitive areas near the TF airport.
 - b. Both the proposed car business and the adjacent excavating company each own lots. As privately owned, not subject to review.
 - c. First Street housing projects: MHC requests notification before construction begins; Mass Historic Commissioner does not require a

permit, but Montague Commission feels the site has historic importance, noting that the ground has already been significantly disturbed. The lot is within a potential historic KPW battlefield zone. Commissioners should be present during ground disturbance activities.

- d. All agreed that the line of communications should be clear between the Town Administration, Planning Dept. and the Historic Commission so that commissioners will be made aware of projects potentially affecting historic or archaeological sites.

3. Maureen Pollock communication about a potential Montague Preservation Plan and Montague comprehensive Plan

- a. The Montague Preservation Plan involves envisioning a 10-year Plan for how the town should preserve and document historical features:
 - 1) inventory historical buildings
 - 2) document potential public access
 - 3) amend town by-laws when necessary
 - 4) outreach and education specifics
- b. MHC would work with consultants to identify all historic and cultural features.
- c. MHC strongly recommends a Montague City Historic district: inventory resources, better community outreach to fulfill commission official mission.
- d. C S-L: the public needs to better understand the importance of preservation. The Farren case shows we have no plan. Montague City and Lake Pleasant do not yet have historic district status. Need to emphasize the archaeological and architectural resources.
- e. The Montague Comprehensive Plan (1999) will be updated. JN will participate. There is a need to include/incorporate an historical dimension. FRCOG will be heading up the process upcoming in October.
- f. The Capital Improvement Plan is under annual review; the MHC should participate.

4. Other:

- a. Reorganization of the commission:
 - 1) Janel Nockleby was voted unanimously to be the new chairwoman of the Historical Commission
 - 2) David Brule will serve a Vice-chair and clerk/secretary
- b. The restricted pedestrian bridge is falling apart onto the railtrail. Still no conversation with First Light about demolition of that structure.
- c. FL is responsible for eventual demolition.

Adjourned at 12:06

Submitted by D. Brule Chairman

