

Heritage Commission Minutes Feb 9, 2012

The Heritage Commission's mission is to identify, preserve and protect the architectural, historical, cultural, and social heritage of the town and preserve the historical landscapes, view sheds, and buildings in their landscapes. These historic and natural resources, the ecological diversity formed by the rivers, valley, and mountains sustain the spirit of the community and its economic vitality and must be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

The commission proposes to do this by educating the public, working with private citizens, other local boards and committees, and state agencies. The H.C. is assembling an inventory of those resources, for the proper recognition, use and protection of these special historical features to achieve our goals.

Present at the meeting were Sheila Kirkpatrick, Duffy Monahon, Bob Duhaime, Dick Estes and David Simpson and Joe Byk, Selectman and Nicole MacStay, (now welfare officer)

November Minutes approved

The HC discussed the GAR Hall and a preservation easement. The HC received a sample easement from the Preservation Alliance, and Duffy is working with Jennifer Goodman of the Alliance to tailor it to the project. Joe Byk reported that there has only been one person interested in purchasing the hall, Jason Hackler; Joe did not disclose the price but added that the Selectmen have the power to sell it without a vote at town meeting. Duffy said she had another person who might be interested in it. Joe said to get more information.

Nicole said that she had shown the Historic Harrisville easement to Jason. Rick Monahon had brought this document (as an example of preservation easements) to an earlier meeting where Rodney Bartlett and Carol Ogilvie first presented the proposal to sell the GAR to the HC. Rick Monahon has since noted that this Historic Harrisville easement is not appropriate today as it was created 30 years ago and would not be fitting to use today. Joe seemed to be uncomfortable with an easement or worried that the purchaser would walk away.

A discussion followed about historic preservation easements and how they are similar to conservation easements, which people seem to have understood. Duffy pointed out that there is a grantee and a grantor. An organization needs to hold the easement and needs to verify over the years how the easement is applied as changes occur. There is a benefit to having an organization such as the Preservation Alliance holding the easement in that it places such considerations above local politics, has the expertise to negotiate the plans and the longevity to monitor the building over a long period. Duffy said that the HC

could be the primary holder and the Preservation Alliance could be the back up holder. Joe was skeptical of an outside non-profit holding an easement.

Duffy told him that this was like having the Con Com holding a local easement and the Monadnock Conservancy or the Forest Society holding the backup easement. This has worked well for a number of years and owners haven't felt threatened by this. Duffy pointed out that the easement should be in place before the town sells it. The GAR Hall is on the State Historic Inventory and is significant architecturally both as the first high school in town and as the GAR, commemorating veterans of the Civil War, and later the First and Second World War. The building and its landscape or setting form a salient landmark of Peterborough.

Perhaps Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance, should come down to make a presentation to the Selectmen.

The HC agreed that Duffy will contact Heidi Malloy and ask her to become a member of the Commission.

The next meeting will be on March 8th at 5pm