



HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES - APPROVED

October 23, 2023 (HYBRID)

Present for the Historical Commission and attending the meeting were Barbara Armstrong - Chair, Jane Slater, James (Jim) Malkin, John Flender (joined at 3:23 PM on Zoom) and Alison Kisselgof – Administrator. Adam Petkus also attended the meeting (on Zoom and later in person).

Lenny Jason was not in attendance.

The meeting came to order at 3:08 PM.

HISTORICAL ITEM PLACEMENT & INVENTORY UPDATE: Barbara said that she started an Excel spreadsheet of all the historical items with numbers, pictures, descriptions and location of item. She also put numbered labels on items to correspond to the spreadsheet. Barbara reached out to Harbormaster Rossi and Chiefs Retmier & Bradshaw to discuss placing some of the Klimm collection in their buildings. Chief Retmier chose a few items for the Tri-Town Ambulance buildings. Barbara asked if Alison could follow up with Chief Bradshaw or Harbormaster Rossi.

Barbara had spoken to Harbormaster Rossi about displaying the net mending needles. She identified a display case for the needles which Harbormaster Rossi said he would purchase. Barbara would like to hire someone to keep the spreadsheet up-to-date. There was a brief discussion about prior issues with placement of historical items. Adam indicated he would like to display some items in the Building Department office. Barbara said that the Commission would discuss what to do with the items not placed at the next meeting.

CHILMARK HISTORICAL COMMISSION AWARD: Barbara nominated Jane for the Historical Commission award. Jim agreed that Jane was a deserving recipient of the award. A motion was made and passed. Alison offered that she would find out who could update the plaque in town hall.

DISCUSSION OF REQUEST TO ADD PLAQUES TO GRAVES OF DEAF: There was some confusion about how this topic came up for the agenda. Jane said that she was contacted by the Cemetery Commission with a request for a list of deaf buried in the Abels Hill Cemetery. She believed that there was a plan to mark these graves. Jane had replied that the deaf were part of the Chilmark community and historically were not singled out due to their disability. She felt the idea was discriminatory and did not support it. Jane would like to write a letter to the Cemetery Commission declining this request in identifying the deaf in the cemetery. Jim made a motion to send a letter to the Cemetery Commission including Jane's comments. Barbara wanted to extend the motion to state that no group with a disability should be identified in the cemetery. Jane offered that the only group that should be identified in the cemetery are veterans.

PLANNING BOARD MASTER PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE DISCUSSION: The Planning Board had distributed a questionnaire to all the boards as part of their efforts to update the Town's Master Plan.

Barbara said that she went through all the town charters and found the Historical Commission was only mentioned in the general bylaws section on demolition and the 1985 Master Plan. She said that the goals in the previous version of the Master Plan still seemed accurate and would answer question 1.



HISTORICAL COMMISSION Town of Chilmark

Barbara offered that membership for the Commission was a key challenge for the Commission (question 2). She felt the Commission should have an alternate member to avoid lack of quorum in meetings. Jim suggested that the Commission notify the Select Board and advertise for new members. Barbara also said that keeping up with administrative tasks was a challenge.

Question 3 was about future achievable goals. Barbara wondered if stone wall restoration should be extended and also if the Commission should follow up about maintenance with residents that previously had their walls repaired by the Town. Jane did not feel stone wall restoration should be extended or that maintenance follow-up was needed since the agreement with residents stated that maintenance was their responsibility. Jim offered that a goal of the Commission is to maintain the rural and fishing character of the Town, despite the demands to modernize and commercialize. Jane suggested that the Commission have a non-voting representative as a liaison to other committees so that the Commission is more informed of their agendas and can advise when needed. Jane also suggested that the Historical Commission could use social media or mailings to remind people of the history of the Town. Doug Seward and Chris Baer were mentioned as people who could assist with this type of outreach.

There was a conversation about the expansion of farm stands and how it affects the character of the Town. The topic of preservation of historic character was mentioned as a topic for Question 4.

UNANTICIPATED TOPICS: Barbara inquired about what the trigger would be send historic buildings to the Commission for review. Alison answered that the Building Inspector would be the mechanism for referral to the Commission. There was a brief conversation about past projects that were brought to the Commission.

Adam joined the meeting in person at 3:41 PM. He offered that he would send projects to the Commission for review if external alternation of 25% or more of a historical building was proposed, which is also the trigger for Martha's Vineyard Commission review. He said that he could send projects with less than 25% change to the Commission if requested. Although Jim and Barbara did not feel it was necessary to see projects with less than 25% being altered, Jane would prefer to see all proposed alterations. A motion was made and seconded that all historical building alternations should be reviewed by the Commission. Adam said he would refer any future projects on historic houses to the Historical Commission for review.

Alison mentioned that she was contacted by a resident who has a home listed on MACRIS. The resident would like to find out how to have a barn on the property added to the historic register. Alison asked how to direct the inquiry. The members were not sure but recommended the resident reach out to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for direction. Jane asked what property was in question and Alison answered that the property is located at 231 State Road (Yellow House #27 on Master Plan).

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: A motion was made to accept both sets of minutes as written. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

DOCUMENTS:

12/5/22 and 7/17/23 Draft Minutes

Planning Board Master Plan Questionnaire

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: December 5, 2023

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator.