



HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES - APPROVED

January 9, 2023 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Historical Commission and attending the Zoom meeting were Barbara Armstrong - Chair, Jane Slater, John Flender and Alison Kisselgof – Administrator. Also in attendance was Judy Flanders from the Cemetery Commission.

James (Jim) Malkin, Lenny Jason and Steve McGhee were not in attendance.

The meeting came to order at 3:01 PM.

CEMETERY COMMISSION UPDATED CPA FUNDS REQUEST: Barbara said that the Cemetery Commission has sent an updated request for CPA funds in the amount of \$10,000 for gravestone restoration. With no further discussion requested, Barbara made a motion to accept the request, John seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote. Vote = Slater – aye, Armstrong – aye, Flender – aye. PASSED

Judy expressed her appreciation of the Commission's time and approval.

MASS. HISTORICAL COMMISSION PRESERVATION PROJECTS FUND GRANT DISCUSSION: Barbara asked Alison to distribute information on the Mass. Historical Commission Preservation Projects Fund Grant to the rest of the members. Barbara asked if the Historical Commission had every applied for a grant from this program. Jane answered no and said the grant would need to be for a big project. She said that members should keep the program in mind in case a project presents itself.

UPDATE ON LETTER TO USFW RE: DISINTERMENT AND REINTERMENT OF NOMANS GRAVES: Barbara said that she had wanted to do more research regarding communication between the US Fish & Wildlife (USFW) Department and the Town on the Nomans cemetery before a letter was drafted. A number of emails from 2014 were found showing that the USFW had in fact reached out to the Town. USFW had requested a contact for Luce family descendants to ask how to proceed with reinternment of family graves. There was also mention that some of the graves were Native American. In November 2014, the USFW emailed about wanting to move graves which were in danger of erosion. The emails showed that John had reached out several times to the USFW as to how the graves were being identified – Native vs non-Native. There is a gap in correspondence until June 2015 when the Town received a draft memorandum of agreement between USFW, the Tribal Preservation Officer and the Mass. Historical Preservation Officer. A letter received with the memo stated that the Town could also sign the agreement as a concurring party but that the Town had no authority in the matter. Barbara and Laurisa Rich decided that the Cemetery Commission would send a letter to the USFW without the Historical Commission since USFW had informed the Historical Commission about moving of the graves. The letter would inquire where the graves were moved.

Alison mentioned a conversation that she had with Tim Carroll on this topic. Tim had said that Nomans is federal property. Since the Wampanoag Tribe is a federally recognized organization, the Tribe was included in the reinternment process but the Town is a state level organization and therefore had no authority. Barbara asked if the Town ever signed the draft memo. Alison was not aware whether this occurred.

There was a brief discussion about how Native American graves could be identified.



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APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: The minutes from the 12/5/22 meeting were not prepared in time to review at this meeting and will be approved at the next meeting.

OTHER TOPICS: None

DOCUMENTS:

12/7/22 Cemetery Commission Updated Request for CPA Funds

2014-2015 Emails between the Town and US Fish & Wildlife Department

Mass. Historical Commission Preservation Projects Fund Grant Information

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: March TBD

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 3:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, Board Administrator.