

Montague Historical Commission
Executive Summary/Minutes of meeting of March 25, 2024

Montague Town Hall
1 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA

Meeting held on-line via Zoom 11 AM-12:14 PM

Commissioners present:

David Brule, vice-chair

Chris Clawson

Ed Gregory

Janel Nockleby, Chair

Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno

In addition:

Caitlin Kelley, director, Montague Public Libraries

Proceedings:

1. Vote to accept the minutes of February 26, 2024, amended to include Jen Viencek, newly appointed MHC commissioner
2. Caitlin Kelley provides updates re status of future strategies for upgrading the Carnegie Library:
 - a. Decision between upgrading the Carnegie or adding construction of a new building.
 - b. The State has funding, CK intends to apply. The application/eventual award will go to Town Meeting.
 - c. \$150,000 will be needed for the design phase. TM approval needed. Grant decision on Montague application will be announced in October by the State.
 - d. CSL advocates for an upgrade and adding on to current building.
 - e. CC: the Carnegie building is sound structurally.
 - f. CK: Carnegie dates from 1905 era ,there are HVAC, asbestos concerns, ADA compliance, need for more square footage, parking, rationale for adding another building nearby to Carnegie, etc all have to be analyzed.
 - g. MHC has general concern for the preservation of the building, alternative use, etc. Will await further updates from CK.
3. Blacksmith shop in Montague Center.
 - a. Jon Dobosz met with Board of Selectmen
 - b. BoS approved Phase I design study at \$3500.

- c. Opinion is that the building is sound, with no leaks. Should proceed to a Phase II.
- d. CC wonders what's tucked away in the attic? When inventoried, any artifacts will go to the Historical Society.

4. HPMP:

- a. This survey was completed in 2016 by First Light.
- b. Comments by Town of Montague are due by April 22 deadline. Town will apply for intervener status; as will the Historical Commission?
- c. CC: HPMP considered confidential, but First Light has materials and documents that should be available to us. Their absolute control over these archives should be challenged.
- d. JN: note that April 22 is the deadline. How can MHC proceed given confidentiality requirements? Executive session? Guidance from Town Administrator will be required.

5. Budget:

- a. Current allocation is \$500.
- b. DB suggests it be used to support the reproduction of the Doug Smith baseball mural to be placed on the Millers Falls Library exterior wall.
- c. DB will contact Suzanne of Riverculture and Kate Martineau of the MF Village Improvement committee.

6. Canal District updates:

- a. BoS approves abatement and demolition plan
- b. Q: any parts of the building to be preserved?
- c. EPA should be invited to view the site for recommendations; hopes are for EPA funding.

7. Montague Comprehensive Plan:

- a. This review will include a Historic Preservation Plan .
- b. CSL and JN will attend the upcoming meeting.
- c. The Montague City planning study final report will be presented. April 2: plan will be reviewed by Planning Board. April 22: the BoS will vote on the plan.
- d. This plan will entail essentially new construction, nothing falls in the purview of the Historical Commission.
- e. MHC: questions whether or not the building materials(e.g. bricks) could be re-used. What about the so-called "prayer bricks"?

Adjourn at 12:14. Next meeting April 29.

Submitted by D. Brule, vice-chair.

