

Montague Historical Commission Meeting Minutes 11-24-25

Commissioners in attendance: Chris Clawson, Ed Gregory, Jen Viencek, and Janel Nockleby. Absent: David Brule

Others: Chris Wise, Montague Common Hall Treasurer

- 1) Montague Common Hall
 - a. The commission voted in favor unanimously to send a letter of support for the Montague Common Hall's application to the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Facilities Fund grant. The goal is to provide an accessible and attractive entrance to the Common Hall and provide parking.
 - b. Chris Wise provided two design scenarios that will be included in the application. Neither scenario impacts the Montague Common Hall building itself.
- 2) The minutes of 10/27/25 were approved unanimously.
- 3) Strathmore mill
 - a. Janel provided an update on the Strathmore Mill demolition process as described in the last 2 selectboard meetings and in the *Montague Reporter*. The selectboard has approved a design/engineering contract for 4 different scenarios, depending on funding. As of now, Building 9 must remain standing as a private hydro plant, thus complicating demolition plans.
 - b. Janel noted that because half of the funding for the demolition happens to be from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, where she also works, that she will be filling out a disclosure form soon.
- 4) Ed Gregory and Chris Clawson will be picking up donated items for the Montague Historical Society from the Commissions mailbox at town hall.
- 5) Next meeting is 1/26/26, unless Janel is unable to attend due to traveling, in which case she will propose another date.

Massachusetts Cultural Council
10 St. James Ave., 3rd Floor,
Boston, MA 02116-3803

11/24/25

Dear Massachusetts Cultural Council grant administrators,

The Montague Historical Commission is pleased to support the Montague Common Hall's accessibility and site improvement project as part of its application to the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Facilities Fund.

Constructed in 1834 as a Unitarian Church and later transferred to the Montague Grange in the 1930s, the Hall embodies nearly two centuries of civic, spiritual, and cultural life in Montague Center. Today it continues that legacy as a place where residents gather for music, dance, and community events.

Having reviewed the proposed plans, the Commission finds that the project thoughtfully balances modern accessibility requirements with preservation of the Hall's historic character. The design is sensitive to original materials and setting, integrates a landscaped ramp and ADA access in a manner compatible with the building and grounds, and improves site drainage to protect the historic fabric.

We endorse this project as a model of how accessibility and preservation can work hand in hand to sustain an important community landmark for future generations.

Sincerely,

Janel Nockleby, Chair
Montague Historical Commission
1 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376