

**Sturbridge Historic Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 8, 2023
Center Office Building**



Present:

Richard Volpe, Chair
Charles Blanchard
Barbara Search
Wally Hersee
Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant
Heather Blakeley, DPW Director

R. Volpe called the meeting to order at 1pm.

Approval of Minutes

December 20, 2022

Motion: To approve minutes of December 20, 2022 as written.

By: C. Blanchard

2nd: B. Search

Vote: 3-0-1 (W. Hersee Abstained)

Maple Street Water Line Project Request for Statement of No Impact to the National Register District

H. Blakeley stated that the Town received a Federal grant for the Maple Street Water Line and that a statement of no impact from the Historical Commission is needed for submittal.

Motion: To sign statement of no impact for the Maple Street Water Line project.

By: C. Blanchard

2nd: R. Volpe

Vote: All in Favor (4-0)

Review revised Phase II materials for the Community Wide Historic Preservation Plan

The Commission thought the document flowed much better than previous submittals and liked the updated formatting. Members noted the following items needing correction:

- Page 14, there are other churches in Town. Should they all be noted – for instance St. Anne's, Bethlehem Lutheran, Sturbridge Worship Center.

- Page 19, Figure 2-6, this is not the Chamberlain Barn. This is the new building constructed by the Publick House. The Commission worked with the Publick House through the demolition delay process to relocate the barn to the rear of the property behind the overflow parking.
- Page 41, First paragraph, this should be “The Old Burial Ground” not “The Old Sturbridge Burial Ground”.
- Page 51, Leadmine Pond is missing. There is another name for Walker Pond that was voted by the Town years ago (Planning Dept. will try to determine if the vote is valid). This is a Town Map and was not produced by PAL.
- Page 53, The Abner Allen House (STU.292) burned down in nearly its entirety. This was from a PVPC Survey document and we are not sure this would be an eligible property. This may take more research and is an example of a survey that should be updated.
- Page 65, Overall Commission members agreed that they are not sure everything between the 50 and 100 year mark should be considered historic structures worthy of preservation unless there are unique historic characteristics associated with them or unless they are truly “historic treasures”. While the 1935 kit house may be significant, not all lake front structures rise to that level.

Some of the items that are incorrect came from other reference documents that have the actual mistake and these are not necessarily mistakes that are originating from PAL, but should be corrected going forward.

Commission members want to have some discussion and input into the Goals of the Plan. For instance, it was noted that many roads are designated as “Scenic Roads” in Town, but it is not believed a lot of thought or analysis went into that bylaw. It was agreed that a Goal of the Plan should be to update the bylaw and the roads that are included and that these roads be designated with signs. This discussion point was raised after reviewing the large number of respondents to the survey that felt landscapes were threatened.

Commission members noted errors within the Exhibits, but know these came directly from survey materials which in some cases contained the errors. The Commission members agreed to go through the document more thoroughly before the next meeting. In one instance a map fails to list Leadmine Lake, but that map was produced during the Open Space Plan Update and was not created by PAL. The errors raised another idea for a potential goal that would be to review older survey documents for errors and create a priority list for new updates.

The Commission wondered how the public input had gone and where that feedback will be incorporated in the Plan and is hoping PAL can provide an update on that at the next meeting.

The Commission also wondered how the large number of responses that the Town should “move on” and not worry about preservation, fits into this Plan.

The Commission discussed the scheduling of the next meeting and decided on March 16th at 10:30am.

Old/New Business

None

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

By: R. Volpe

2nd: B. Search

Vote: All in Favor (4-0)

Meeting adjourned at 1:45PM