**Hopedale Historical Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2016**

**Little Red Shop Museum**

**12 Hopedale Street, Hopedale, Massachusetts**

**Present:** Jonathan Chase, Chairman; Raymond Andreotti, Treasurer; Suzan Ciaramicoli, Recording Secretary; Kelly Merchant

**Absent:** Frederick Oldfield, III

**Guests:** Jennifer Smith, Management Assistant, Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park; Mike Potaski, Chairman, Uxbridge Local Historic District; Allison Horrocks, Department of the Interior – Americorps VISTA Volunteer 2016-2017

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jonathan Chase at 7:00 p.m.

**Guests’ Topic of Discussion: Local Historic District (LHD)**

As of December 19, 2014, the **Blackstone Valley** became the 402nd unit of the **National Park Service (NPS).** Having a Local Historic District (LHD) is considered to be instrumental in the historic preservation of sites contained within a national park. Formation of a local historic district needs to be a locally led effort and must meet the standards as set forth by the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation. The NPS will provide guidance and preservation recommendations that align with these standards. Jen Smith reminded us that the NPS places great emphasis on ***visitor experience.*** Although having limited resources, they may be able to provide assistance with signage, staffing, expertise, programming, and planning.

The mission of the NPS is to create a world-class National Park in the Blackstone River Valley.

The NPS is working on establishing specifics of the Park boundary. The current NPS target is to have a general “boundary” within three years of the passing of the legislation.

After our February HHC meeting, Jen Smith reached out to the towns of Uxbridge, Grafton, and Hopkinton to see if someone in a leadership position with their Historic Commissions would be willing to come and talk to us about their experiences in getting a LHD passed in their community. Mike Potaski, Chairman of the Uxbridge Local Historic District, graciously agreed to come to today’s meeting.

Two of the Rhode Island sites, Slatersville and Ashton, have solid LHD proposals in place. Whitinsville is nearing completion of a proposal to go to its selectmen this fall. The contact in Whitinsville is Ken Warchol (kenwarchol2@msn.com). Whitinsville is including most of its municipal buildings (Church Street) and may also add housing.

**Mike Potaski stressed that the key to successful establishment of a LHD is “education.”** Mike said that Uxbridge has had a LHD for 14 years. Mike researched and determined that Hopedale has 797 properties in its National Historic District.

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Mike shared that this is a legalistic process that takes from 18 months – 2 years to complete.

* The LHD in Uxbridge is contiguous. It is easier to add on to an existing a LHD than to create a second LHD.
* We need to get “buy-in” from the Board of Selectmen. He suggested that they first be approached informally.
* Also need to reach out to the local Board of Realtors and Architects. Not obligated to wait for a response before moving forward.
* A Local Historic District Study Committee needs to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
* It is preferable to have folks serve on the LHSDC who live in the proposed district.
* Contact (email) Chris Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, to ask that he work with and provide us with materials and guidance for this process.
* **People need to be committed!!!**
* Recommends that there be a town budget line for the LHD Study Committee.
* Additionally, he recommends that once a LHD is in operation, we need to request a budget line for expenses related to carrying out the responsibilities of the LHD; such as postage to notify abutters and to place public hearing notices in newspapers, etc. Initially recommend $500.
* Mike said that having an application fee in place would provide financial relief for some of these costs. He said this is not well received by some applicants.
* Must go to town meeting to establish the LHD.
* A by-law must be drafted by the LHD Study Committee and reviewed the Attorney General’s office – usually is rubber-stamped.
* Can exempt certain things from LHDC review.
* Can hold joint meetings with the LHDC and HHC.
* Big question is usually over signage requirements within a LHD.
* Once the LHD is established, can draft wording or regulations to provide more detail to enforce things.
* Need a public hearing to do this.
* One of the key items requiring review is for anything that is visible from the street.
* MGL 40C establishes the authority of LHDC.
* Cannot compel restoration, but if someone does a restoration, you can somewhat control its appearance.
* Requirements of a LHD can be waived due to hardship.
* The goal is to have a restoration/addition be “as close to the original as possible.” The appearance should not be “inconsistent with the historical nature of the LHD.”
* Best to exempt as few items as possible, but to make those exemptions “reviewable.”
* Will need a study of properties. If already done, can go to MHC database (cultural resources databases)

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* Can be done pro bono. Do not necessarily need to hire someone for the survey process.
* There are already at least 200 LHD’s in Massachusetts. Go to the MHC website to view the list.
* Once a LHD is established, it is suggested that a letter be sent to residents, at least once a year to maintain visibility with the public and to send out a survey every once in a while as well.
* Mike recommended contacting some organizations that do archival work such as the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) and New England Antiquarian Society. Some organizations will even conserve and post on their websites.

**Continuation of HHC business meeting – 8:35 p.m.**

The **Minutes of the March 2, 2016 HHC meeting**, prepared by Sue Ciaramicoli, were emailed to members of the HHC on 4/6/16 at 5:59 p.m. Sue also brought copies to the meeting for review. A motion was made by Kelly Merchant, and seconded by Ray Andreotti, to accept the March 2, 2016HHC Meeting Minutes as presented (and emailed). Jonathan asked if there needed to be any discussion about the last meeting’s minutes. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Ray reported the following expenses:

* Eversource - $108.42 LRSM
* National Grid (electric) – March 2016 - $122.70 LRSM
* Comcast – $98.58 LRSM
* Verizon - $12.92 LRSM – monthly allocation made to LRSM by the Town.
* Reimbursements to Sue Ciaramicoli for purchases approved last month - $414.00

A motion was made by Sue Ciaramicoli and seconded by Jonathan to pay Kelly’s Cleaning for cleaning the LRSM in the amount of $100. Jonathan asked if there needed to be any discussion about the expense. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

A motion was made by Jonathan Chase and seconded by Kelly Merchant to reimburse Sue for the cost of 6 track lighting lightbulbs in the amount of $26.81. Jonathan asked if there needed to be any discussion about the expense. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

Ray Andreotti made note of **photo notebooks in Dan Malloy’s possession** that might be very helpful for identifying other items here in the LRSM. Ray will speak to Dan about the possibility of borrowing them. Not sure whether they actually belong to the Bancroft Library’s Collection.

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**BHC Partnership Grant**

* **The Project is well underway!!!!**  Work sessions were held on March 6th, 12th, 19th, 23rd, 30th, April 2nd, and 3rd.
* Work sessions are scheduled for April 9th, 16th, 21st, 23rd, 27th, 30th, and May 1st.
* **Partnership Grant Project Reimbursement Status -** Sue prepared and submitted a detailed, revised Project budget to Jonathan on March 14th. He forwarded it to Megan DiPrete, Deputy Director of the BHC, for review prior to our follow-up meeting with her on March 25th. Megan modified the Project budget format, assigning each item to one of four Project Elements:
  + Computer and Electronic hardware and software (hard cost)
  + Archival Storage Supplies and Expenses (hard cost) and volunteer hours
  + Memberships and Training
  + Looms
* In preparation for our next follow-up meeting with Megan on April 15th, Jonathan will gather his notes and emails to develop a “scope of work” or description of the Strategic Planning work.  We will then work together to be sure it is comprehensive both in terms of the programmatic scope, and the process for achieving it.
* Sue will gather additional information, particularly relative to the costs associated with moving the looms (truck rentals / donations, fuel costs, etc.).  Finalize Volunteer hours/costs.

**Sue met with Library Director Ann Field** - regarding the Bancroft Library’s Collections Policy (they have no historical collections policy yet). Ann also provided Sue with some archive and grant information resources.

**Sue met with potential Cataloging Project volunteer Phyllis Foley** – she has some archival experience.

**Meeting with Tom McGovern, Chairman Emeritus, Little Red Shop Museum Committee**

Sue met with Tom on March 17th to solicit input about cost estimates for equipment and supplies that she was including in the revised budget for the Cataloging Project, among them data storage and physical storage of items.

Tom offered to donate a **digital camera**, to the LRSM, that could be used for this Project. Sue will provide Tom with a letter from the LRSM, acknowledging the donation and its value, for tax

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purposes. He might also be interested in donating the **projector screen**, still being held here at the LRSM. These would represent donations-in-kind for the Cataloging Project.

They also discussed different options for data backup and their related costs:

* **Managed cloud backup** – 20G. Information would all be encrypted and cost us an estimated $20 (?) per month using “TwMcCloud.” This would provide backup everyday (or however often we wanted) of our data and would move it offsite. So, if we had a fire, flood, or theft, our data would not be lost. This product, TwMcCloud, would automate the backup task, encrypt the data, store it offsite in two locations and, someone confirms the completion of the backup each week.
* Preventative maintenance at a cost of $81(?) per year.
* Preventative maintenance with remote access at an additional cost of $39(?) per year.
* Purchasing one or two laptops for the Project and going forward, to help us “tell our story.” Tom suggested that we consider a touch screen laptop so we could do “kiosk” selection on screen. If going this route, perhaps we could purchase one now and one later.
* We spoke about getting a bigger hard drive for our existing computer at the LRSM.
* Sue requested assistance with setting up the **Curator email** on the computer at the LRSM
* **HVAC service** at the LRSM – tune up is overdue. Tom suggested calling Tommy Reardon.

**Third Grader Hopedale Scavenger Hunt Project -** many students have come with their family members. Tentative Walking Field Trip visits with Sue, as Volunteer Curator are:

* Wednesday, June 8th: one group at 8:45-9:45 and one at 10:15-11:15
* Friday, June 10th: one group at 8:45-9:45 and the other at 11:00-12:00

**Requested HHC Leadership Change Request**

This agenda item was tabled last month so more HHC members could be in attendance. Sue Ciaramicoli requests that her position of HHC Co-Chair be reinstated as her reason for stepping down was because of the tenuous situation with a volunteer over the last year or so. That individual is no longer involved with the LRSM. She would also be happy to continue serving as Recording Secretary. A motion, so doing, was made by Ray Andreotti and seconded by Kelly Merchant. Jonathan asked if there needed to be any discussion. There being none, and none opposed, the motion passed.

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**Requested BHC Partnership Grant Leadership Change Request**

This agenda item wa**s** tabled last month so more HHC members could be in attendance. Sue Ciaramicoli requested to be named a Co-Project Manager for the 2015 BHC Partnership Grant Project. Sue feels that, as Curator of the Museum for the last 6 years, she has been a key player in the Project thus far, and will going forward, as well.

Jonathan thought this might be an issue as he was the one to sign off on the contract with the BHC last year as the Project Director. Sue will check with Megan DiPrete. This item is tabled until the next HHC Meeting.

**Blackstone Heritage Corridor Annual Meeting Breakfast – March 23rd, Slater Mill**

Sue reported that she attended the breakfast and chatted with former Senator Dick Moore (also a Hopedale native) about Hopedale’s absence at recent NPS and LHD meetings. They exchanged contact information. Senator Moore would likely be a valuable resource in our efforts to establish a LHD as he was instrumental in Hopedale being included in the new national historic park.

**Trademark Room Bookcase Project** – Sue reached out to FoHH volunteer Tom Beder for help in the design, specifications and cost estimate for an L-shaped, two-sided bookcase along the railings of the Trademark Room. This would help with the storage needs for some of the newly cataloged books and artifacts.

**New *Town of Hopedale* Website** – As agreed to by the majority of members of the HHC, via return email, Sue Ciaramicoli, has offered and been approved to be, the administrator of the new HHC webpage and will take the upcoming training to do so.

A motion was made by Jonathan Chase and seconded by Ray Andreotti for the meeting to adjourn at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Sue Ciaramicoli, HHC Co-Chair and Recording Secretary