

**Sturbridge Historic Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 3, 2023  
Center Office Building**

**Present:**

Richard Volpe, Chair  
Charles Blanchard  
Barbara Search  
Wally Hersee  
Kathy Peterson  
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant  
Jean Bubon, Town Planner



**Also Present:**

Terry Masterson, Economic Development Coordinator  
Derek Heidemann, Old Sturbridge Village  
Peter Reilly – Friends of Lafayette

R. Volpe called the meeting to order at 2 PM and introduced Kathy Peterson as the newest member of the Historic Commission.

**Approval of Minutes**

June 15, 2023

**Motion: To approve minutes of June 15, 2023 as written.**

**By: C. Blanchard**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: W. Hersee**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (K. Peterson Abstained)**

**Meet with Peter Reilly of the American Friends of LaFayette to discuss the Bicentennial of Lafayette's farewell tour and a potential event in Sturbridge**

P. Reilly came before the Commission and gave a background on Lafayette, he was very popular in the United States and went on tour to honor the Veterans of the Revolution in 1824. He discussed other events that are currently being planned for 2024 to celebrate the bicentennial of Lafayette's tour. Lafayette was in Sturbridge on September 3, 1824 and P. Reilly stated that he would like to have the celebration in Sturbridge on September 3, 2024, which is a Tuesday.

The Commission discussed the history of Lafayette's visit to Sturbridge in 1824.

D. Heidemann discussed OSV's involvement and stated that OSV would not be open on September 3<sup>rd</sup> but they would be sending their actors to other locations for their Lafayette

celebrations and that the Village would like to see something happen on the Sturbridge Town Common, possibly having a reenactment on the Common.

C. Blanchard asked if anyone has talked to the Publick House about being involved. T.

Masterson stated that he would reach out to them.

P. Reilly discussed possibly making it a ticketed event.

C. Blanchard stated that the Historical Society has a lot of interest in the event.

B. Search stated that she wants to make sure the event doesn't fall under the Historic Commission, that Tourism will take lead of the event.

### **Vote to adopt the recently completed Town of Sturbridge Historic Preservation Plan (August 2023)**

The Commission and J. Bubon discussed next steps in the process and are waiting on feedback from Mass Historic.

**Motion: To adopt the Historic Preservation Plan.**

**By: C. Blanchard**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: W. Hersee**

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0-1) (K. Peterson Abstained)**

### **Member Discussion**

#### **- Fiskdale Mill Park**

- W. Hersee discussed the disrepair of the Mill Park and stated that the DPW will go down there and weed every once and awhile, he asked the CPC if CPC funds could be used to fix up the area but because CPC didn't pay for it initially, CPC funds can't be used. He asked if there were any grants that could be applied for.

J. Bubon stated that there is money to replace the signage at the park and that she worked with a student over the summer to create an "adopt a space or park" program and thinks that the upkeep would fall under Facilities or DPW.

W. Hersee suggested reaching out to landscape companies that could come and present what they could do to better the space, and ask surrounding businesses if they would like to pitch in to help, reach out to the Betterment Committee?

J. Bubon stated that the Town put a lot of money into creating the park but then it was never maintained and that it needs to be determined who owns the maintenance of it.

C. Blanchard discussed the history of the location.

#### **- Civil War Monument**

- W. Hersee discussed the missing names from the monument in front of the Library.

R. Volpe asked if money was already approved at Town Meeting for this



project.

J. Bubon stated that Robyn Chrabasz (Facilities) has money to update the monument.

W. Hersee state that there were new names he had discovered since the funds were approved at Town Meeting. Private Simon G. Newton and Corporal Ferdinand Rogers. He stated he spoke with Robyn Chrabasz and she stated she could add those names to the monument with the funds from Town Meeting.

C. Blanchard suggested that the Historic Society be notified as well so that they could hold a ceremony.

- **Potential Recognition of Abolitionist, Lucy Coleman and Private Crockett Edwards**

- o W. Hersee discussed Lucy Coleman ad that she was a suffragette and an abolitionist. She was born in Sturbridge and suggested there should be a plaque or sign in Town.

J. Bubon stated that CPC may have funds for something like that and that if it is something the Commission wants to take on, costs would have to be figured out. If it something the Commission suggests to the BOS they could also choose to take on the project and use CPC funds.

The Commission discussed funding and grants.

C. Blanchard discussed the role of the Commission and stated that this type of project may be better for the Historic Society to take on.

B. Search mentioned that there may be an abolitionist society in Worcester that may have funds.

W. Hersee stated that he was just looking for direction from the Commission and ideas on who would be best to work with to make these types of projects happen. He also discussed Private Crockett Edwards who was from Tennessee but died in service to Sturbridge, he is not suggesting his name for the main monument but would like to see him recognized somewhere in Town.

- J. Bubon stated that she would follow up on the Fiske Mill Park with Robyn Chrabasz, Robin Grimm and the DPW.
- C. Blanchard discussed the centerpiece that is currently in the park and commemorating the industry that was there.
- W. Hersee stated that he would follow up with Robyn Chrabasz, Robin Grimm, and the Historical Society on the other items discussed.

**Potential Dates to begin work on an Action Plan with Jennifer Doherty, Mass Historic Commission**

J. Bubon stated that she hasn't received dates back from Jennifer Doherty yet but she will let the Commission know when she does.

**Old/New Business**

J. Bubon stated that there will be a town booth at Harvest Fest if anyone would like to volunteer to man the booth.

B. Search asked if they had any things to give away at the booth. J. Bubon stated that they only have brochures.

J. Bubon discussed the action plan and next steps with goals. C. Blanchard stated that the plan should be introduced to the Planning Board, ZBA, CPC, etc. J. Bubon stated that she will try to set up appointments with each of those Boards starting in November and will let the Commission know.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion: To adjourn**

**By: R. Volpe**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: B. Search**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 PM