

LEVERETT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

July 3, 2017 @ 7:10PM Town Hall

In Attendance: Susan Mareneck, Edie Field, Sara Robinson

MINUTES:

Approval of Minutes from 5/8/17, 6/12/17 Hold for next meeting. (no quorum)

1. **Update - Digital Archives Project & Cemeteries** (SM, EF)
 - Update: Cemetery research UMASS History grad. student (Nolan Cool) will work on updating Form E for Long Plain/ Hillsboro during July 2017.
 - **Austin & Nolan would be willing to give a talk during the summer on the cemetery research they have been doing in Leverett. Could we arrange?**
 - New information from MHC on cemetery preservation planning; MPPF may need to be one cemetery at a time. SM speaking with Ross Dekle at MHC.
 - Update: Cemetery Preservation Campaign (EDDM); Julie to Ruth West re Paypal on LHS website; printing complete - mailing on 6/30/17.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- SM will ask Nolan if a Sunday afternoon would work for talk. Sara will check on availability at Library (or Town Hall?)
- SM spoke with Ross Dekle of MHC. He explained that it would be unusual for MHC to grant MA Preservation Project Funds (MPPF) for a group of burial grounds. The survey is in depth, encompassing gravestone marker conservation, landscape restoration (tree, shrub trimming), drainage, fencing/ enclosure restoration, etc.. He also explained that the seven cemeteries that Nolan & Austin recently submitted "Form E's" to Mass Historical Commission, if deemed eligible to be submitted for National Register of Historic Places designation, would not finish the approval process for 18 mos. His suggestion was that we ask Tamara Conde, gravestone conservationist, currently conserving gravestones in Jackson Hill Cemetery to tour the eligible cemeteries (part of National Register Historic Districts: Moore's Corner, East Leverett, Jackson Hill, Chestnut Hill/Mt. Hope and Marvel) to help us determine which is most in need. Since Moore's Corner, Jackson Hill have received some recent conservation efforts through town CPA funding and Marvel is privately maintained, East Leverett is currently receiving new burials and also regularly maintained, our first thought is Chestnut Hill/Mt. Hope. It has quite a few unique features and a range of burials from Civil War era to WWII.
- SM will look for photograph of Jackson Hill wrought iron gate decoration. There is interest in collecting funding to have those decorative elements restored. (The remaining one disappeared on Halloween 2016).
- Ruth West and Julie Shively instituted a Pay Pal donation option on the Leverett Historical Society website to accommodate donations to the recent Cemetery Preservation Campaign solicitation (EDDM). The donor can choose between Cemetery Restoration, Moore's Corner School House, Leverett Family Museum and Slarrow Sawmill (NL) funds.

* Sara Robinson requested connection to Boston Public Library, digital

collections. The North Leverett Baptist Church would like to submit their archives (250 years in 2017) to be scanned and added to Digital Commonwealth. SM will put her in touch with Jake Sadow at BPL.

2. History related/ Cultural Event possibilities – (SR, EF, SM)

- *“Education in Leverett...”update: MA Humanities declined to fund. Shall we mount a local effort?*

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- Sara, Edie and SM concur that they would like to move ahead with the collection of oral histories related to school experiences of local elders who attended both village and the consolidated schools in Leverett. Most of the two dozen or so people whose names are on our list are not getting any younger and it seems important to collect these memories now. Another factor is the willingness and interest by Alyson Bull, LES 6th grade teacher and Margo Lacey, Principal. The participation of 6th grade students in the interview process and use of the school for interviews, would make the experience rich for everyone.

- We will ask for community volunteers to help us build secure cases to display valuable objects in the Library Gallery and to help us transpose the interviews. Framing will have to be done as inexpensively as possible. The presentation in spring 2018 may be in video format, depending on the willingness of the elder LES alums, our “scholars”, to be captured on video. Would Sam Redman, the Oral History Lab director at UMASS have grad students who might help with transcription? SM will check in with him.

- Next step is to meet with Alyson Bull and Margo Lacey to develop a time-frame for the fall/winter. Sara will follow-up.

3. Strategic Planning for Historical Assets Survey (AS, SL, SM)

- *Town-wide Historical Assets Strategic Planning initiative. Connection with Conservation Commission Open Space Planning? Work with MHC (Chris Skelly) on possible Survey and Planning grant/process?*

- *Field Library CPC application?*

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- SL working on questions for Historic Assets Survey. We imagine that we can combine them with the oral history query as well. Both will be implemented in fall 2017. It seems important to survey residents about their priorities before submitting more Historic Preservation requests for Community Preservation Act funding. (Several large \$100,000 projects can eat up significant portion of the one third of CPA funds designated for Historic Preservation.)

- The Historical Society should be asked to document the improvements that have been made to both the MC School House and Leverett Family Museums and to work on a way to present the collections that Dan Bennett and Edie Field, Along with many others over the years have preserved. Future use for the Field Library building should be part of the strategic planning process.

- SL, EF and SM are all interested and willing to attend the “Open Space Planning” for Leverett led by the Conservation Commission with guidance from Franklin Regional Council of Govts. (FRCOG)

4. LHC Yearly Preservation Restriction Monitoring: (AT, AS, SM, EF)

- Scheduling dates to visit local CPA funded sites in fall?

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- SM will check with Dave Finn on placement of NRHD signs recently completed by Bill Rathbun with CPA funds.

5. LHS (EF)

- New summer hours: 2nd & 4th Saturdays 10-1:30pm, except for 7/15 or by appointment. Call 413-548-9452.

- Possible meeting in the summer at Leverett Library (on a Thursday eve. before music?)

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

- Edie will provide reasons CPC declined to fund renovation of Field Library.

- LHC hopes Historic Assets Survey and Strategic Planning process will allow a consensus to emerge about Leverett's "preservation priorities" and allow us to put in place some strategies around ongoing maintenance of historic properties, our common heritage.

6. New Business – Next meeting date – (2nd Monday of August is 8/14. Plan
"Memorial to Leverett Veterans for Memorial Day 2018?" NL Baptist church 250th 7/15-
16, 2017!; Plan for Leverett 250th in 2024? (All)

