

Town of Stow
Stow Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2023

I. Call to order

The regular meeting of the Stow Historical Commission was called to order at 7:31 p.m. on Thursday, November 2, 2023 on Zoom.

II. Roll call

The following people were present:

Commission Members: Dot Spaulding, Barbara Clancy, Stacen Goldman, Bob Norton

Absent: Andy Crosby Guests: Barbie Wolfenden, Randall Library Trustees

III. Meeting Minutes

Stacen Goldman made and Bob Norton seconded a motion to approve the October minutes as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Treasurer's Reports

Barbara Clancy made and Bob Norton seconded a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Building Permits

Not discussed

VI. Community Preservation Committee/Randall Portrait

Barbara Clancy said that the CPC will hold a public meeting on the CPC plan on November 20. The Historical Commission's part of the plan was approved at the end of last year. Barbara said she will send it out to commission members.

Barbie Wolfenden introduced the Randall Library Trustees' CPC application for restoring the portrait of John Randall. The portrait is a photo with charcoal details dating to the late 1800s. It is planned to be rehung in the library when the reconstruction/addition project is complete. The Library Trustees and Friends of the Library support the restoration and suggested applying for CPA funds. The Historical Commission has to approve the application.

The estimate for the restoration work was provided by Northeast Document Conservation Center. They are currently storing the portrait and frame. Their estimate includes superficial redo of the gold leaf frame, removing the portrait backing, replacing the current glass with museum quality glass, and some restoration of the portrait itself. Barbie added that the original CPC application was pulled and a new one was submitted because the estimate for the work went up when Northeast Document Conservation failed to take account some steps in the process.

Dot Spaulding moved that we approve the Trustee's CPC application and recognize the portrait as a historically significant object. Stacen Goldman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Stow Artifacts

Dot Spaulding said that she has added box numbers and box location to the entries in the artifact spreadsheet. She will also print out a list of items stored in each box and attach to the boxes, and leave a revised index in the Town Hall room where items are stored. She has also reminded Doug Hyde to lock the room.

Dot said she has talked to Denise Dembikoski about the items, and Denise agrees that some things on the list could be deaccessioned. Stacen Goldman agreed that some items have a stronger connection to other towns and could be offered to them. We also don't have information on some of the items, which makes it harder to relate them to Stow history.

We need to find out requirements around selling or giving away town-owned items. It would also be good to have an appraiser look at some of the items that are said to be very old since some may be mis-dated.

Stacen recommended sorting items into three categories: 1) important items with strong links to Stow that should be repacked in acid-free boxes/packing and archived to be kept long term; 2) items with an unknown connection to Stow that can stay in the present packing and be researched and appraised and possibly kept or sold; 3) items from other towns that can be offered to those towns' Historic Societies or Commissions. We could also sort items that are in the town vault and in the Town Building attic.

Items donated to the library belong to the town, as does anything donated prior to the establishment of the Historical Society. Proper storage to protect items is an issue. Stacen thought that items at the Town Hall would not be damaged if they stayed there over the winter. The town could turn unwanted items over to the Historical Society. Indigenous items should be repatriated. Dot also noted we need to talk with Linda Hathaway about items in the town vault. Stacen volunteered to through the spreadsheet line by line and start the sorting process.

VIII. West School

Barbara Clancy made suggested changes to solicitation for quotes. She said she probably can't take on managing the project but if family issues settle down she will try to get back in sync with Town Meeting and potential CPA funding.

IX. New Members

Associate members are still needed.

Old and New Business

Dot Spaulding has two requests for historical plaques. Barbara Clancy said that she would send Dot some information on craftspeople who might make plaques.

The Stow Acres event went well despite the rain. A historian from Lexington gave a talk about Mapledale. The talk is posted on the unofficial Stow Facebook page.

X. Correspondence

None received.

XI. Adjournment

Stacen Goldman made and Barbara Clancy seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next meeting: December 7, 2023

Minutes submitted by: Barbara Clancy



Minutes Approved: 12/6/23