

RICHMOND HERITAGE COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting Held on October 15, 2014, 7 pm at the Veterans Hall

Attending: Carol Jameson, Hank Hallas, Susan Marsden, Bob Weekes. Not present: Sandy Laughner

Minutes of the last two meetings held 9/19/14 and 9/25/14 were approved.

In Sandy Laughner's absence, Bob Weekes updated Commission members on the Town Hall Well & Abbott Memorial Watering Trough project. Included were actions taken by S. Laughner, S. Roney and B. Weekes to improve the site (weed whacking and brush removal, excavation of the Town Well during which the original location of the watering trough was discovered), pump restoration (wire brushing to remove rust, revealing original paint), as well as new information gleaned from interviewing town residents and outside plumbing and well experts. This confirmed our suspicions that the green pump which had been in the possession of former Richmond Road Agent, Joe Davis, was indeed the pump that was once affixed to the top of the Town Well. Next steps on this project, approved by the Commission at our meeting, will be to prepare the pump for reattachment to the well cover (cutting the unneeded base off the pump; priming and painting it; and fabricating a new steel base to connect the pump to the well cover), site preparation (terracing the plot surrounding the Town Well for featuring the well & trough and also for future planting; and preparing a solid base for the watering trough adjacent to the well). Our hope is to move the trough back to the well before the snow falls. Susan Marsden correctly noted that the trough should have a N-S placement so that the inscription on the trough can be seen from the road.

A general discussion of the role of Quakers in the settlement of Richmond followed, led by Hank Hallas.

The meeting next turned to a discussion of tax deductibility for funds that might be raised for RHC projects. Hank Hallas shared a point of view which he and Louise Hallas have developed on the subject. Carol Jameson offered to pursue the legal issues further.

Hank Hallas presented a written response to points he felt Bob Weekes had made in his power point presentation to the Board on 9/19/14, focusing on points he disagreed with concerning historic and cultural areas that should be given highest RHC priority. Bob Weekes responded and moved that final decision on deciding Commission priorities be deferred until all members were present. Motion carried.

Carol Jameson stated that she would like to explore adding some funding for RHC operations to the 2015 Town Budget. All enthusiastically supported this.

Hank Hallas returned to the subject of RHC priorities and said he would be willing to add to his preferred list the public buildings which were the focus of Bob Weekes' power point presentation. Carol Jameson asked that Bob forward this list to her all so she could circulate the list to all for consideration prior to our next meeting.

Bob Weekes then revisited the matter of both the RHC and the RCDA studying changes/possible improvements to the same geographic "town center," a circle with a radius of one-half mile centered by the 4 Corners. He feels that despite wordsmithing different statements of each organization's mission and vision, there will be a high likelihood that each group will duplicate efforts of the other. This degree of overlap can only be avoided if we seek collaboration at the outset. And it also threatens our success as it pertains to the possible restoration of the Tramp House since it does not seem to be on anyone's agenda but our own.

Bob views our tramp house as "the most ignored historical asset in the Town of Richmond." On town owned land, its restoration could center a vest pocket park, one that would be integrated with additional work that would enhance the Richmond Public Library across the road (additional parking for the RPL adjacent to the Library, not across Route 119 which presently is a safety hazard for parents and children; and possible recreation of the steeple that once graced the roof of Schoolhouse #6 at its east end. Note: the original school bell that once hung in the steeple sits in the basement!). Importantly, this vision of a new Tramp House/Library area (and Pavilion/Recreation area behind the Library and Fire Station) should be part of any 4 Corner visioning under consideration by the RCDA. And to date, there is no indication by the RCDA that it is!

The meeting concluded with agreement that educating town residents to the importance and significance of the Tramp House was necessary. This might begin by collaborating with the RCDA and RPL on a joint program on the 4 Corners area, with guest speaker Alan Rumrill (Historical Society of Cheshire County Executive Director) speaking on tramp houses and care of the poor through history in our area. Carol Jameson said she would discuss this with Sandra Gillis of the RCDA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Weekes, Secretary