



**TOWN OF MEDWAY**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

*Medway Town Hall  
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**Minutes**

Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 7:00 p.m.  
Senior Center, 76 Oakland Street

*Commission  
Members*

Jeanne Johnson,  
Chair

Paul Russell, Vice  
Chair

Eugene Liscombe,  
Treasurer,  
Representative to  
Community  
Preservation  
Committee

Cher Hamilton,  
Member

McKenzie Ward,  
Member

Morgan Harris,  
Member

Rich Eustis,  
Member

**Members in Attendance:** Paul Russell, Morgan Harris, Jeanne Johnson, Gene Liscombe, Cher Hamilton, Rich Eustis

**Members Absent:** McKenzie Ward

**Others Present:** Barbara Saint Andre, Director of Community and Economic Development; Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

Guests attended the meeting: Linda Donnelly, Anne Marie Fontecchio, Steven Brody

**Meeting was called to order by Historical Commission Chair, Jeanne Johnson at 7:05 PM.**

**I. Demolition Applications to consider- 37 West Street**

This property is part of a comprehensive permit under Chapter 40B which can override local zoning and other by-laws. After reviewing the legal citations, Medway Town Council agreed with Metrowest Collaborative's attorney, Mr.

Haverty, that they are not required to come before the Historical Commission. They withdrew the application to demolish a historic house and are permitted to tear it down with no input from the Historical Commission. Mr. Steven Brody, who lives next door, at 39 West Street, stated that 37 West Street has not been vacant since 2019 (as stated in the withdrawn application) but has been partially occupied and used. He had proposed moving the house, but an agreement with Metrowest Collaborative to do so was not possible. The home had been preserved, renovated, and improved by its most recent owner, Eric Fray, a uniquely talented builder, and Mr. Brody felt Mr. Fray should be recognized for that even though he is not a historic figure in Medway. We agreed but right now there is nothing more the Historical Commission can do.

**II. Sanford Mill Dam---** Linda Donnelly stated removing dams in Medway is part of the Master Plan-Phase 3, section 2. She mentioned speaking at a Select Board meeting. She further suggested changing the word "building" to "structure" in the demolition-delay by-law (Article XVII) to give more protection to historical structures like dams and bridges. The dam is privately-owned and Select Board is unsure who owns it. Jeanne suggested that Ms. Donnelly and Ms. Fontecchio email Jeanne or Barbara Saint Andre with their suggested word changes to the by-law for consideration at the fall town meeting. Rich believes protection of a "structure" should stand on its own and questioned if it had to funnel through a town committee to have value. The Bridge, Dam, and Mill are listed in the Medway Village Historic District, an important consideration if an application to demolish were to be submitted in the future. Ms. Donnelly commented that she had located the State's playbook for removing dams, and the Historical Commission had the most suggestions. She will share this information with Jeanne.

Jeanne did some research on dam removal and read this statement: *There is a nation-wide, possibly world-wide, movement to remove most dams for reasons given above (at our March meeting). The nation's aging dam infrastructure is failing and dam safety is critical. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave the nation's 91,000-plus dams a D grade, the same grade they have received in every ASCE report card since the first one was issued in 1998. Largely due to lack of funding, federal and state dam safety officials have been unable to procure from disinterested state legislatures and Congress the tens of billions of dollars needed for repairs to the nation's aging dam infrastructure.)*

Ms. Donnelly said she had spoken to the State House about the Sanford Mill Dam. They are unsure of the current condition of the Sanford Mill Dam, but they noted it is not very high priority, and if it were to fail, the release of the water would have a short-term impact and then level out; it would not cause loss of life. The beauty of the dam is conservation land headed downstream. Jeanne stated there is a natural fall above the dam.

**III. Demolition by-law changes. Proposed changes will be on the May Annual Town Meeting Warrant for vote by citizens.** The major change would be to allow a delay of demolition on houses 200 or more years old for two years if they are determined to be preferably preserved after a public hearing.

**IV. Minutes to consider – March 23, 2022** --Defer until the May meeting.

**V. Treasurer's Report (Gene Liscombe)** No change. \$2,500 balance.

**VI. CPC Report (Gene Liscombe)**--No updates.

## **VII. Project Updates**

### **A. Signs**

The Commission is working on signs for the cemeteries explaining the history. These signs will be similar to those at playground at the corner of Park Street and School Street. Paul shared quotes for the signs.

The sign at the Garnsey site will include a photo of the excavated foundation from many years ago, along with a sketch of the house.

The design roughly costs 1,000 to 1,500. Framed single pedestal base are \$315 each. Committee members agreed the single based pedestals look nice. The cost is about \$1,400 per sign. When plans are finalized, we will request CPC support for funding from CPA funds, about \$6,500 - \$7,000 for all the signs.

*On a motion made by Gene, seconded by Morgan the Historical Commission voted to move ahead with the sign quote.*

### **B. Flexible Wraps for traffic signal boxes**

Rich was asked to brief the Select Board on the Historical Commission's general plans for this project, which he did. Other groups (Cultural Council and Design Review Committee) are also interested in covering these boxes. Many people agree that our plan to wrap them with historical photos would be consistent with the historical character of certain areas of town. The Select Board recommends that the Historical Commission meet with the other groups. Morgan and Rich mentioned that some citizens have come forward and offered to privately pay for the project if the committee did not have this in the budget. If it gets to that point, we can invite them to a meeting and get it on record if they are comfortable. Barbara stated if someone would like to donate to the town- the donation must be attached to a name. Rich asked if they could gift to the town for a specific purpose. This will have to go through the Select Board – the donation cannot be anonymous.

Paul shared estimate for the 3-sided wraps. Cher asked if the quote could be expanded to include all four sides of the boxes.

The Select Board asked Barbara to set up a meeting of this Commission with Cultural Council and Design Review Committee to discuss covering/decorating the traffic-control boxes, with results presented to Select Board. Historical Commission should be responsible for the boxes near Historic Districts. Have a sketch where the boxes are that they would like to utilize. Barbara has a map that the committee could utilize to make selection of boxes.

**C. Local Historic Districts--Table for now.**

**D. Request for funding of digitization of Jameson History of Medway will be included in CPC article for all projects.** Requested \$10,000 and CPC agreed. This will be in the omnibus article for all CPC projects. Assistant Town Manager Allison Potter will ensure this project meets the rules of requesting bids.

**VI. New Business**

A. Historical Commission member terms expiring in June: Jeanne Johnson (would like to continue), Gene Liscombe (he will continue), Kenzie Ward (Jeanne has contacted – she will try again.)

B. A new steering committee, “Native American & Indigenous Peoples’ National Heritage Commemoration Day” was established in April by the Select Board, and the HC was asked to select a representative to the committee. Cher Hamilton volunteered to serve as HC representative.

**VII. Master plan update and discussion**

Barbara shared a slideshow and provided a brief overview of the Master Plan. Under Mass State Laws, Master Plans should be completed every so often, which Medway does every ten years. This one is now in Phase 3 – What steps/strategies should we take to reach the goals selected in the previous phases? This is a fluid project – subject to change. Barbara explained that they’ve held several outreach events with the public to obtain input: focus groups, community forums, committee meetings, meeting with various boards, online surveys.

The Master Plan website can be found on the town’s home page. Reports completed in Phase 1, Phase 2 (draft vision and goals report), and a draft of strategies in phase 3 can be viewed there. The overall vision for Medway is broken into 4 core themes. They are working on strategies right now to determine how to reach the overall visions that were suggested in the beginning. The Master Plan goes to the Planning Board and they make the final decision. Barbara suggested going through the strategies and providing feedback. Select a section – each 11 sections provide the draft goals and input from the focus groups. You can rate or add comments. In addition to the 11 different sections/categories, at the bottom you can view all 70-80 strategies.

One of the modules is Historic Resources – 3 strategies that they were looking for more feedback on. Barbara mentioned they are going to all the town boards and committees and going through this exercise.

**A. Education.** Expand and create walking tours, publications, and online information to promote awareness of Medway’s history, including the history of Native American, immigrant, and other historically marginalized populations This strategy can expand the role of the Medway Historical Society and the Medway Historical Commission to create further opportunities for residents of all ages to learn about Medway’s history.

Paul mentioned include the schools, Historical Commission, and Historical Society. Provide lessons in schools about the History of Medway.

Members rate this a 5 (5 being most important).

**B. Local Historic District.** Consider the establishment of local historic districts to further protect Medway's historic resources, including a Local Historic District for the Rabbit Hill neighborhood.

Include the Village Historic District? Jeanne stated it would be good to expand these areas. Woods Corner- not a historic district yet but important in Medway history

Members rated this a 5.

**C. Floating Historic Districts.** Consider the establishment of a floating Local Historic District to add more protection to Medway's oldest (pre-1800) buildings.

Members rated this a 5.

D. Create another strategy to protect other historic structures/resources such as dams, monuments, mills, and bridges. Cher questioned updating this to (pre-1900) buildings.

**Annual report was submitted by Jeanne.**

**On a motion made by Gene; seconded by Paul, the Historical Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:01 PM. Next meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2022, at 7:00 p.m at the Senior Center.**

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Mitchell, Recording Secretary

*These minutes were approved at the HC meeting on June 22, 2022.*