

Montague Historical Commission
Minutes of June 25, 2020 meeting

Meeting held outdoors at 1 Avenue A
Turners Falls, Mass.

Commissioners attending:

Chris Clawson
David Brule
Ed Gregory
Jeff Singleton

Not attending:

Suzanne Lomanto

Proceedings:

1. Open meeting at 11:00
2. Minutes read by DB; motion to accept by EG, second CC. Voted unanimously
3. Updates from Walter Ramsey re agenda items:
 - a. The KPC smokestack and First Light bridge: no new updates other than the demolition will be done by drone.
 - 1). JS asks that the top be taken down separately and preserved for historical purposes. EG responds that Steve Ellis has said it would be too expensive. JS requests that Steve write a statement to that effect.
 - 2). EG states that he will request a statement to that effect in writing.
 - b. WR recommends that MHC contact ZBA and Planning Board to include the MHC in reviewing proposals and plans for projects that may have an historical impact. JS will contact these boards.
 - c. WR recommends that MHC send a letter to Board of Selectmen requesting to be included in discussions of capital improvement plans and projects. DB will write a request to the Selectboard concerning this.
 - d. A space for storage of MHC documents, etc can be located at the Town Hall.
4. The First Light bridge: the current status remains unclear. At one point it was an element of negotiations with the utilities in the relicensing process. In the reuse of the Strathmore, the bridge was included in restoration. What is the current status? JS will write to Steve Ellis and Walter Ramsey for precise information about the status of the bridge.
5. Updates on the Millers Falls Rd Solar project. DB reports that:

- a. A registered letter was sent to Omni Navitas requesting that an archaeology survey be completed on this culturally and archaeologically sensitive site before beginning destruction/construction.
 - b. Barring the above, Walter suggests that in the interests of being a good neighbor , at the very least, a Tribal Historic monitor (such as Mark Andrews of the Aquinnah Wampanoag with extensive experience in our region) be hired to be present during construction to identify any archaeological artifacts found.
 - c. Tribes of the Wampanoag, Nipmuck, Abenaki, Narragansett, and the State Archaeologist were cc'd in the message. There has been no response as of this writing on June 30.
6. Topics not anticipated: the petition to change the name of Turners Falls and the petition to keep the name of Turners Falls
- a. A lively discussion ensued.
 - b. Each Commissioner spoke about his feelings and concerns, preferences.
 - c. The name can be debated on many levels: historical, cultural, Indigenous point of view, how the falls got its name, the industrial identity and heritage, etc.
 - d. The consensus reached was that the MHC could play a role of mediator and moderator between the two groups at some date in the future, likely in the fall.
 - e. Chris Clawson volunteered to develop a draft MHC position paper that would describe the consensus reached during the meeting and the role that the MHC historians could play in this issue.

Adjourned at 12:20

Submitted by D. Brule, Secretary.