

## **Dracut Historical Commission Meeting Minutes January 18, 2023**

**Present:** Patrick Cox, Chairman  
David Paquin  
Louise Tremblay  
Linda Kawa  
Henri Marchand  
Rebecca Duda  
Mark Gosselin- Absent

Chairman Cox called the meeting to order at 6:00pm, at the Historical Society, 1660 Lakeview Ave, Dracut, MA.

### **Minutes:**

Linda Kawa made a motion to approve the November 16th, 2022, meeting minutes. Louise Tremblay seconded the motion, the motion passed.

### **Community Input:**

Caroline Zuk, who resides at 100 Old Parker Road, stated a lot of people know her from running Saja Farm, but that is not why she is here tonight. She wanted to make light of the fact that she will be working on a project which will end up being a book called, East Dracut's Treasured Past. Rebecca Duda, who is her mentor will be her ghost writer to assist her when needed.

There are many farms in Dracut like Beaver Brook but, as Caroline explained, she wants people to know how Dracut came to be as a Right to Farm community. To get a real understanding of that. The book will touch upon different areas of history, starting with the colonial times, going through World War 1 and in between to capture the 1800's and the 1900's where many have grandparents who came at the turn of the century.

The book will focus on specific streets as, Parker Rd, Old Parker Rd, Wheeler Rd, Wheeler St. Everything from the start of the families, from the Winthrop's to Parkers, to Varnum's to the Polish community that once flourished and occupied all of Parker Rd.

Caroline stated, she wants to showcase that element of culture as she explained she is doing this for no other reason, except she is passionate about her own history. Also, history is general and particularly in farming. Caroline stated she thinks it would be a great educational tool, by imparting this knowledge people will see we really need to be proud of their town.

As we see more and more developments come in and things go away, maybe this will turn people's heads and see we can be as just as special as Concord and Lexington and some of the other colonial towns who have managed to gracefully allow some developmental things to come in but not lose sight of why we are in Dracut. Caroline explained she might be reaching out from time to time to see if there are some older pictures or artifacts she would be interested in seeing. The Committee wished her luck and thought it was a great project. Chairman Cox told Caroline to reach out anytime.

#### **Discussion – Historic Building and Murals:**

Chairman Cox explained Mr. Paquin received an email from Dan Phelps, of Dracut Economic, explaining about potentially having some UMass Lowell students paint a mural of the side of the old mill building at 76 Pleasant St. Mr. Cox explained Joe DiCarlo is the owner of the building. He reached out to him but has not heard back yet. Mr. Paquin explained, what I think they are looking for is an advisory from this committee.

Mr. Paquin stated, his suggestion would be for this committee to send a letter, stating these are our stipulations, however you must default to the Building Department for the size. The Committee agreed. Mr. Cox explained he will reach out to Mr. DiCarlo again.

#### **Demolitions:**

Chairman Cox, explained the Building Inspector is now putting any demolitions request through a website that Marylee Enos has access to. If any demolitions come in as a request through the website, she will bring it forward to Chairman Cox for an agenda item at the next meeting.

#### **Beaver Brook Farm Ad-Hoc Committee Update:**

Chairman Cox explained the ice rink hasn't been able to hold any water yet with the nice temperatures. It hasn't been cold enough this winter. They are hoping it will work later and plan on having a grand opening on February 19<sup>th</sup> if the ice freezes.

Chairman Cox explained the BBFC did a walk through with the, the DPW Director and some members from Open Space on Monday. They went over a potential driveway which would end up being about 250 feet down from the existing driveway. It would be basically in the middle of the field, so we are looking at possible route to follow along the stone wall. It is in a spot where the stonewall is already gone so there would be no moving it. It seems like it would be the best option.

The parking lot is still up in the air, we must wait to see whether the workshop comes down first, but that would be the ideal parking lot.

As far as s handicap accessibility goes, we looked into coming down that first slope and off to the right, towards where the townhouses are to have the handicap parking there as well as some designated spaces up top.

The trail will have to be graded out, below a five percent grade in order to be considered to be handicap accessible.

Ms. Tremblay asked what does that mean as far as the haying contract, Ms. Kawa stated they should be able to just go around it.

Chairman Cox stated he will keep the committee updated on the ice rink if anything changes.

#### **Bills:**

Louise Tremblay submitted the bills that were paid by the accounting office on behalf of the Historical Commission which are included in the filed minutes. Linda Kawa made a motion to ratify the bills that were paid. Henri Marchand seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Louise Tremblay submitted the Treasures report.

#### **Communications:**

Chairman Cox passed out a letter he received from the Open Space Committee as the Chair of the Historical Commission. Mr. Cox wanted to get our committees feelings on this and if we want to have a joint meeting on the following;

The Open Space Committee is interested in looking into the historical status of the Beaver Brook Farm property, (761 Mammoth Rd) and the outbuildings located on the property.

They would like to place all the Beaver Brook Farm buildings on the National Historical Registry. Linda Kawa asked how can the outer buildings that are in such disrepair and might even come down eventually, as the ones adjacent to the gardens, be added to that list. What would be gained from that. Mr. Cox stated, its basically to get it on paper to get it in a database. Many of these buildings that are on the National Register are gone.

They don't hold you back from demolishing it. It's a picture and a write up on it.

If anyone wanted to look it up, you could google it.

Mr. Cox stated, his suggestion would be, if we were going to take the necessary steps to potentially put, say even just the seed shed on the list.

I would not go as far as the National Registry right now, I would say maybe the first step try to get on the Massachusetts Register of Historic places, if anything.

Instead of just going with that one building, come up with a new list of others also.

Additionally, the Open Space Committee would like to have the Beaver Brook Farm as part of a potential National Register District, along with some surrounding Farms in the area. They want to include the Richmond-Donahoe-Charbonneau Farm (343 Donahue Rd). The Willett farmstand (664 Mammoth Rd), the Thomas H Connell House and Barn (737 Mammoth Rd) and the Osgood-Cutter Farm (746 Mammoth Rd).

Linda Kawa explained there are a lot more farms in Town that should be added as well. They have a good start with some but let's not stop there. Mr. Cox stated we should make a list because there's far more valuable properties than just this list. Mr. Cox asked how the committee feels about putting a list together and coming back and maybe reassessing this.

Louise Tremblay made a motion for a recommendation, to look further into other historical farms and buildings that need to be incorporated with the ones at Beaver Brook Farm. Rebecca Duda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Cox, explained the Open Space Committee would like to have a meeting to discuss the current status of placing the outbuildings on the National Historical Registry, the steps needed to place future buildings on

the National Registry, and to discuss what it would mean to establish a National Register District in Dracut.

Chairman Cox explained both committees will look into a meeting date in the future.

**Old Business:**

**None**

**New Business:**

None

Linda Kawa made a motion to adjourn at 7:04pm. Louise Tremblay seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Next Meeting**

**February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**