



Town of Sudbury

Historical Commission

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MINUTES

DECEMBER 7, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Chair Chris Hagger, Vice-Chair Diana Warren, Diana Cebra, Taryn Trexler, Jan Costa, Marjorie Katz, Steve Greene, Fred Bautze

Others Present:

Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Duchesneau, Planning & Zoning Coordinator Beth Perry, Board of Selectmen members Janie Dretler and William Schineller, Rick Conard, Railroad Historian – Wayland Historical Commission; Stacy Spies, Historic Preservation Consultant

Mr. Hagger opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Eversource Transmission Line Project

Mr. Hagger introduced Stacy Spies, the historic preservation consultant who is providing the Commission with expert direction and information with the Eversource project. Mr. Hagger commented on the Area Inventory Form and National Register Criteria Statement prepared by Ms. Spies, and acknowledged the thoroughness of the drafts.

Ms. Warren thanked Ms. Spies for her work and stated that Ms. Spies visited the project site many times to conduct field research on the project area of the Central MA Railroad ROW.

Ms. Spies provided details concerning her research and commented on important railroad features she discovered within the rail resource area which include but are not limited to:

- Smaller culverts not visible to the public or to Commonwealth Heritage Group, Eversource cultural resource consultant.
- Many Whistle Posts
- Concrete Sign Posts
- Equipment
- Evidence of a solid corridor by Landham Road, where earth was cut, and built up around wetlands. By Dutton Road blasting was performed to provide cut for the rail

Ms. Warren asked if all culverts along the right of way were classified as historical features, regardless of design. Ms. Spies responded in the affirmative, adding that the features dated from 1881 to 1971 (Period of Historical Significance), when the freight trains were running.

Mr. Hagger asked about the switch stands. Ms. Spies stated that Mr. Conard indicated that one of the stands came from a different rail line. Mr. Concord stated that two of the switches were from the B&M line, and one from the New Haven line. Ms. Spies noted that because those mentioned switches were moved to the current location, the assigning of classification was somewhat difficult, and

dependent upon if they are affixed to the ground or not. Mr. Conard indicated the switch stands were likely not affixed to the ground.

Ms. Warren commented the corridor line “cut and fill” would contribute as a significant feature. She added it was the contour of the railway landscape that becomes part of the resource. Ms. Spies confirmed the statement, and read from the gold-standard measure of such historical significance for a railroad - The Minnesota State-Wide Nomination of Railroad.

Mr. Hagger inquired about National Register eligible aspects of the railway and asked if other nearby communities had similar features which determined that the entire rail stretch is National Register eligible. Ms. Spies responded she is still working on that aspect, and would be following-up on the Blackstone Valley Canal system.

Mr. Hagger inquired about condition of elements on the rail corridor regarding National Register eligibility. Ms. Spies responded that her study supports the rarity of elements, despite the condition of the items. Ms. Spies stressed the uniqueness of the railway features, as opposed to historical homes and barns. Ms. Warren opined about the restoration of such features which would involve permission from owners of the right of way to conduct restoration.

Ms. Warren spoke of Bridges 127 and 128, and stressed that the stone abutments were historical features, which Eversource was proposing to eliminate or partially replace. Ms. Spies agreed, and confirmed that the features dated back to 1880 and 1881.

Mr. Hagger commented his opinion that the changes proposed for Bridge 128, were minimal; as opposed to plans for Bridge 127 which propose to eliminate three rows of visible blocks, reflecting the removal of almost all of the abutments. Ms. Warren emphasized that Bridge 127 would be removed, and would revert from an approximately 45-foot bridge to approximately 70-foot bridge.

Resident Jim Gish, 36 Rolling Lane, asked if the abandonment status would change the historical significance/eligibility. Ms. Spies responded not.

Mr. Greene asked if there had been a determination that the increase in length of Bridge 127 would be necessary for safety or change of terrain. Ms. Warren responded such questions should be asked of the Eversource representatives when they come before the Commission. Ms. Spies read the Eversource statement which indicated that raising the bridge three feet out of the water, would require that the new bike path meet the height of the new elevation per DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) guidelines and best practices. Ms. Warren stated it appears that DCR was not subject to the Ch. 106 review as DCR would not be performing any of the related construction work that would impact the resources.

Ms. Warren commented that the Station Tool House was a rarity in the State. Ms. Warren presented the Section Tool House sheet plan submitted by Eversource to the Commission, which does not include the

loading dock/platform attached to the structure. Ms. Spies asked if the dock and platform were newer structures added to the Tool House. Ms. Warren replied she would research that aspect.

Resident Nick Pernice, 255 Peakham Road, inquired about the Eversource proposal to hang the high voltage lines underneath the bridge. Mr. Hagger responded that at the recent Eversource Ch. 91 Waterways public hearing a picture showing conduits on the outside of the plate girders. Mr. Hagger acknowledged that he asked why the conduit was not placed between the two plate girders rather than on the outside of one of them which would obscure the image of the plate girder/s. Mr. Hagger confirmed that he would ask that same question of Eversource at the upcoming meeting. Mr. Pernice expressed that he thought that placing the conduit on the outside would impact the historic aspect of the bridge.

Mr. Pernice asked about the archeological resources impacted by the project, and possible religious/sacred sites, including stone landscapes along the rail road right of way and the project area. Ms. Spies commented that such information had been redacted in the Locational Survey. Ms. Warren stated that the Commission is working on obtaining an unredacted copy of the "Archeological Intensive Locational Survey", however that information may not be made public. Ms. Warren announced that the Commission had started to post all related documents from Eversource on the Town website.

Ms. Warren stated that the Commission is concerned that a full consultation has not happened with all the tribes despite the contradictory information from Eversource. Mr. Pernice said he would provide the Commission with the contact information for John Brown the THPO of the Narragansett tribe.

Ms. Spies noted that a pre-contact site was recognized within the east side of the Landham Road bridge 127, and outside of the limit of work.

Resident Rebecca Cutting, 381 Maynard Road, stated her cousin Eric Heart, of Concord, forwarded documentation regarding the MA Central Railway bisection, to Ms. Warren to be shared with Ms. Spies. Ms. Cutting asked if the report completed by Ms. Spies could be posted on the Town website. Ms. Warren confirmed the report would be made public when final.

Ms. Cutting spoke of a splice vault in proximity to the Section Tool House, which appears as a 15-foot deep concrete vault with a manhole requiring clearing of some 30 feet.

Resident Julie Franco Lieberman, 19 Rolling Lane, inquired about the 2017 survey report, and subsequent correspondence from the MA Historical Commission regarding a more intensive survey, and if members of the tribes were involved in that report. Ms. Spies referred to the Intensive Survey dated May, 2019, adding that she did not see anything about the tribes. Ms. Warren noted that a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe was present at the Eversource consultant's site archeological field work visits.

r. Hagger spoke of the two signals along the rail right of way, considered to be special features. He noted that the two signal structures appeared not to be in great condition. Mr. Conard stated that signal 208 on Horse Pond Road was referred to as an interlock signal which directed eastbound trains. He noted that both signals were designed to protect the crossing of the two railroads to avoid collisions. Mr. Conard indicated that the signal on Horse Pond Road was in better condition than the signal east of Bridge 127. Ms. Spies acknowledged that the signal near Bridge 127 was missing a disc, which she found on the ground in proximity. Mr. Conard suggested that the Commission consider preserving one of the signals, and indicated that parts would likely be available. Mr. Conard offered to provide the contact information regarding the people who performed some maintenance on the signals in the past. Mr. Hagger confirmed

that preserving the signal would be preferred. Ms. Spies referred to the Eversource plans which indicated removal and resetting of the signal. Mr. Hagger maintained that the signal (given its condition) should be preserved in place.

Ms. Cebra asked if protective areas around the signal could be untouched and all restoration be done on the current site. Mr. Hagger agreed with Ms. Cebra's suggestion.

Ms. Warren initiated discussion regarding the historic cross-track diamond feature, where the Lowell line bisects the Central MA line. Ms. Warren noted that Eversource and DCR are proposing to remove the diamond, and replace it with a paved rotary. She advocated for retaining the diamond, and noted that a similar railroad diamond was preserved in Acton or Concord.

Mr. Greene asked if a siding bypass had been discovered on the railway. Mr. Conard confirmed there were several such bypasses in Wayland, one in Weston, and indicated there had likely been one double-ended siding in proximity to The Mullin Lumber Company, east of Union Avenue in Sudbury. Ms. Spies stated she had a picture of such siding in Sudbury, circa 1970, and the railbed was surrounded by weeds. Mr. Conard stated that most of the siding near the lumber company was still there, though buried in certain places. He informed the Commission that the siding was used to park the passenger trains overnight from 1965 to end of service in 1971. Mr. Conard recommended the assessors records be reviewed to determine who owns the siding in Sudbury. Ms. Spies affirmed she would include the siding element in the listing of historical features.

Mr. Pernice asked if the Section Tool Station dimensions were accurate in consideration of the work areas and impacts. Mr. Hagger stated that further questioning would be presented to Eversource regarding this matter.

Ms. Cutting inquired about a battery box in the Dunton Road area. Mr. Conard detailed the existence of a circular battery box next to signal 208, adding that there could be others along the right of way, which could be circular or square. Ms. Spies commented there was another circular battery box in the east end, with cabinets along the way.

Mr. Pernice expressed concern about the small number of test pits in the study area, from an archeological standpoint. Ms. Warren commented in order to conduct an archeological dig, permission must be granted from the MA Historical archeologist. She noted that in order to secure such a permit, a plan must be submitted to the MA Historical Commission. Ms. Warren recommended that the Sudbury Historical Commission could ask the MA Historical Commission about the evaluation, and if they were satisfied with the plan the Commonwealth Heritage Group submitted in order to conduct the field work. Ms. Warren suggested that Mr. Pernice contact MA Historical Commission and present the question stated.

Ms. Warren stated that the Eversource project would adversely affect the Sudbury railway historical resource. Ms. Spies stated that Commonwealth Heritage Group left many historical aspects unreported, and sidestepped by documenting that such findings were not eligible. She emphasized the existence of features that would be adversely effected. Ms. Spies maintained that the railroad corridor was eligible for listing as a historic district under Criterion A but would continue her evaluation before completing the final draft.

Ms. Warren itemized her concerns regarding impact of proposed changes:

- Replacement and demolition of Bridge 127
- Partial demolition of Bridge 128
- Harm to the Section Tool House in consideration of visual pollution around it, the clear-cutting, the removing of the track, project corridor too close to structure
- The Rail Corridor, the entire length of the rail bed to be totally modified and some of the railroad features will be moved and not restored to the original locations/setting
- The diamond would be demolished
- Entire length of the rails and track would be removed
- Culverts
- Alteration of the rail bed

Ms. Spies agreed with the potential extensive negative effects on the resource and features.

Ms. Warren informed the Commission that she had contacted the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington, DC recently, and was informed that the Council had not received a recommendation from the Army Corp to find that the project has an adverse effect on historical resources although Mass Historical Commission had recommended such in the Dec, 2019 letter to the Corps. Ms. Warren stated that the contact at the Advisory Council asked if the Historical Commission had made a formal request to the Corps to be recognized as a Consulting Party. Ms. Warren told the contact that the Commission had done so and the contact said the Council would follow up with the Corps if provided a copy of the letter. Ms. Warren commented that the Council said that the Sudbury Historical Commission could formally request that the Advisory Council agree to become a consulting party. Ms. Warren recommended that the Historical Commission formally ask the Advisory Council to become a consulting party.

Ms. Warren asked Ms. Spies if she agreed that it was a good idea to ask the Advisory Council to be a consulting party and Ms. Spies said yes.

Ms. Spies stated that the Army Corp of Engineers owns the timeline, which could take some two years. Ms. Warren asked if the Council could impact the timeline and Ms. Spies said that the Council could on procedural matters and jump into the (Section 106) process.

Resident Ray Phillips, 40 Whispering Pine Road, addressed the historical inventory and asked about cattle bones found. He noted that the identification of important archeological assets should not be performed by college interns, and asked about the actual backgrounds of those individuals conducting the survey. Ms. Spies explained that in her experience, interns worked under the strict supervision of the skilled, experienced archeological professionals. Ms. Warren offered to research the background of the archeological professional.

Mr. Greene inquired about how other local towns have handled historic artifacts found on proposed rail trails. Ms. Spies responded that she would perform additional research on that aspect, and explained that Wayland and Weston had preserved more of those elements when compared to Milford.

Mr. Hagger stated there has been no information from the Army Corp of Engineers about the release of the MOA or a sense of when the Commission needs to submit comments, though the Commission was meeting to be able to prepare comments.

Ms. Warren summarized the letters for the Commission to send the Advisory Council the letter the Commission sent to the Corps requesting to be recognized as a consulting party and a letter to the Council requesting that the Council be a consulting party. And to also send a letter to the Corps requesting a copy of the draft MOA. She agreed that the letters be sent.

Ms. Warren also stated she had called the Mass. Historical Commission to ask if they had received a draft MOA from the Corps and they had not but would inform the Historical Commission when did,

Selectman Schineller commented that Eversource will be conducting a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen on December 15, 2020 for Grants of Location Permits.

Mr. Pernice noted that he found the Appendices to the Intensive Survey and asked if a report accompanied the Survey.

Community Preservation Committee Accepting Proposals – Historic Preservation Plan Update

Mr. Hagger confirmed that he made a presentation to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for Historic Preservation Plan funding. Ms. Warren stated that the CPC will likely vote on the Commission's application at the January meeting.

Massachusetts Historical Commission Grant for Inventory Project Update

Mr. Hagger stated that he, Mr. Duchesneau, and Ms. Trexler would soon be issuing a contract involving a consultant to work on the historical inventory surveys. He noted that the consultant would have to be approved by the MA Historical Commission.

Master Plan – Preservation/Cultural Resources - Historical Commission Comments Update

Mr. Hagger confirmed that the Historical Commission sent the comment letter to the Planning Board about the Master Plan. Ms. Warren added that the official comments finalized by the Commission were submitted on December 1, 2020.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Mr. Hagger suggested that the Commission resume action regarding the Demolition Delay Bylaw in January, 2021.

16 Haynes Road – Bowker Store

Mr. Hagger confirmed that there was no response from the property owner. Mr. Bautze stated said he would be seeing a relative of the owner this week-end at the Sudbury Transfer Station, and would present another copy of the letter approved by the Commission.

Hosmer House

Ms. Cebra stated the purple light was installed at the Hosmer House in support of Sudbury-Wayland-Lincoln Domestic Violence Roundtable efforts. She noted that the Roundtable group sent a letter of thanks to the Commission.

Ms. Cebra detailed that a Christmas tree was being displayed inside the Hosmer House, with candles in the windows. She noted that the Boy Scouts donated a Christmas tree, which was being displayed on the grounds of the Hosmer House.

Ms. Cebra explained to the Commission that there were some electrical issues with the front door lights at the Hosmer House. She indicated that Facilities Director Bill Barletta and his team fixed the problem. She spoke of items in the Hosmer House storage room that are for sale, and noted demand for the afghan throws. She mentioned that she sold six afghans to the Wayside Inn Barn.

Ms. Cebra detailed that the Sudbury Historical Society would receive one of the throws and 30 throws are on order at this time.

Mr. Hagger asked Ms. Cebra if selling the throws at the Wayland Depot was a consideration. Ms. Cebra responded that she would reserve the

Mr. Hagger suggested that the Hosmer House be cleaned in the next few months.

Community Education additional throws at the Hosmer House, in case there is a special need.

Ms. Cebra stated that after the Commission's November meeting she reached out to Gretchen Schuler about her presenting a historic preservation program and Ms. Schuler had not responded. She suggested that Mr. Hagger and Ms. Warren assist with an additional contact to Ms. Schuler. She suggested that a preservation program – like about old homes or tools for preservation be a jointly sponsored presentation the Sudbury Historical Society.

Mr. Hagger recommended that the Sudbury Historical Society reach out to the Wayland Historic Society to join in such meeting. Ms. Cebra agreed.

Ms. Warren offered to discuss the proposed programing with Ms. Cebra. Ms. Cebra agreed.

Approval of October 20, 2020; November 9, 2020; and November 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hagger motioned to approve the October 20, 2020 minutes, as amended by Ms. Warren. Ms. Cebra seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 7-0; Costa-aye, Hagger-aye, Greene-aye, Cebra-aye, Warren-aye, Trexler-aye, Katz-aye

VOTED: To approve the October 20, 2020 minutes, as amended by Ms. Warren.

December 10, 2020 and December 15, 2020 Meeting Agendas

Mr. Hagger stated the agenda for the December 10th would include Eversource and the approval of the November 9, 2020 meeting minutes.

Mr. Hagger stated the agenda for the regularly scheduled Commission meeting on December 15, 2020; would include Eversource and approval of the November 17, 2020 meeting minutes.

Adjourn

Mr. Hagger motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Greene seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 7-0; Costa-aye, Hagger-aye, Greene-aye, Cebra-aye, Warren-aye, Trexler-aye, Katz-aye

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:37 PM