



**TOWN OF BECKET  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
557 Main Street, Becket, MA 01223  
TOWN HALL – (413) 623-8934  
FAX – (413) 623-6036

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, February 13, 2024

**Meeting Time:** 5:00 PM

**Meeting Place:** Historical Commission Office, Town Hall

**Attendees:** Sandi Jarvis, Gail Kusek, Rita Furlong, John Garvey

**Members Attending on Zoom:** Michael Lavery (left Zoom at 6:03pm)

**Guests Attending on Zoom:** Christopher Felker, Amy Felker (left Zoom at 5:30pm)

### **Minutes**

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:03pm by Chair Sandi Jarvis
2. A motion was made by RF to accept the minutes from the January 2024 meeting, seconded by GK. SJ made a correction to a reference to “Jacob’s Ladder” should have been “Jacob’s Pillow”. The minutes were passed with this correction.
3. RF reports no changes from last month; fiscal year balance of \$1,214.38 and a Gifts/Donations Account balance of \$656.40.
4. Business
  - a. Christopher and Amy Felker talked about their efforts to document and preserve their house at 3238 Main Street. They shared some of the results of their research. They are working with a consultant to come up with the information for a MACRIS entry, which they will forward to the Historical Commission when it is complete. They are also interested in obtaining a house plaque when that program is up and running. This was followed by a discussion about possible preservation funding sources.
  - b. Bylaw Review Committee request: JG presented the potential Demolition Delay Bylaw changes that had been discussed at a previous meeting. These suggestions came from a Massachusetts Historical Commission review of all Demolition Delay Bylaws. For our bylaw these changes would include adding a definition of “Demolition”, adding a 50-year look-back and removing any geographical limitations.

- a. JG moved that the Historical Commission recommend that the following changes to the Demolition Delay Bylaw be forwarded to the Bylaw Review Committee for their consideration:

1) In Section 2, **add**:

"Demolition-Any act of pulling down, destroying, removing, dismantling or razing a building or commencing the work of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same."

2) In Section 2, **replace**:

"Historically significant building or structure: Any building or structure which is (1) importantly associated with historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town of Becket, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States; or (2) is historically, architecturally important by reason of style, method of construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures."

**With:**

"Significant Building: Any building within the town which is in whole or in part fifty years or more old and which has been determined by the Commission to be significant based on any of the following criteria:

(1) The Building is importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town or the Commonwealth; or

(2) The Building is historically or architecturally important (in terms of period, style, method of building construction or association with a recognized architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings."

3) In Section 3, **replace**:

"The provisions of the section shall apply only to any building or structure: (1) listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register (2) located within one hundred and fifty (150)

feet of the boundary line, documented with maps, of any federal, state or local historic district.”

**With:**

"The provisions of the section shall apply to any building or structure determined by the Commission to be significant as defined in Section 2, "Significant Building"."

- c. Historic Building Plaques-changes, orders: JG reports no progress on this item.
- d. Cupola restoration: RF and JG report that they still have not received an updated estimate from the contractor. As soon as that estimate is available the information will be forwarded to SJ for the preparation of the CPA request. The CPA request needs to be completed by February 29. RF informed SJ that this request can be a copy of the original request, just with the amount adjusted.
- e. Thomas Merryfield/Merrifield, 1700s, farm Bonny Rigg: This query was researched last month by SJ finding Merryfield families in Becket but could not identify any on Bonny Rigg Hill Road. Additional research has still not identified any Merryfields on Bonny Rigg. GK will send additional information.
- f. Ephraim Walker papers: GK and SJ will work on getting these papers scanned. As time permits they will also be transcribed. It was suggested that anyone who works on the transcription task to be sure to inform the other commission members as to their progress so that duplicated work can be avoided.
- g. Basket display Town Hall: At this time the Commission will pursue an exhibit on Jacob's Pillow. A basket display may be considered at some time in the future.
- h. Revolutionary War veterans-Crittenden: SJ provided the information she had come across concerning a Crittenden who served in the Revolutionary War from Becket but is not included in our documentation. She will forward this information to ML who is working on the veterans documentation.
- i. Ballou Park signage-Native American mill stone: GK reports no progress on this item yet.
- j. History of Jacob's Pillow written by Elsie Johnson of the Texas Women's University, 1967 thesis: SJ has reached out to Norton Owen, archivist for Jacob's Pillow, concerning this item which he had previously said he could provide digitally to the Commission.
- k. Massachusetts State Archive maps: JG reports no progress on this item yet.
- l. 2027-100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Becket Flood: No report this month but continuing to monitor the upcoming anniversary.

## 5. Communications

- a. Town notifications: None
- b. 27 Prentice Place: GK is compiling information about this property and will forward it to the requesting party when she has completed her research.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:42pm.

Next meeting – March 12, 2024 at 5:00 PM, Becket Town Hall