

Bridgewater Historical Commission
Meeting 3/23/2023

Minutes

Meeting was open via Zoom at 6:00 PM

Attendance was Geoff Merriman, James Walsh, David Moore, Matt Casey, Pat Neary.

The Zoom meeting was conducted from the Jarvis meeting room at the library. I have been informed by the Town Committee Coordinator that the room is not equipped to handle hybrid meetings but we will continue to try again next month as it worked good in January. The next meeting will be held at the regular time and date, the third Tuesday of March, the 23rd at 6 PM in the library. James and David were present at the library

David presented the following information to those present:

Demolition Delay hearing request for 357 Center St. has been canceled by the proponent. David reported a brief unconfirmed history of the building as possibly it being part of the former Pratt Tavern. The building may have been originally located on the corner of Swift and Pleasant Streets.

Word has been received from the state Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, in response to our comments, that they are continuing to work with Claremont on their Nip project. David reported that Bill Smith Chair of the HDC may be working on a Historic District designation for the stone chamber as being the oldest structure in town.

David will write a letter to the Community Preservation Commission in support of the preservation of the frieze panels. These are four plaster artistic panels that once hung in the McElwain School.

The High Street Dam removal process has begun. Those wanting a last look should stop by to see it.

The Scotland Church, the oldest church building in town is up for sale.

David reported that he has tried to locate the grain Indian grinding stone that had set in the front entryway of the Memorial Building for many years. It was possibly the last remaining artifact of the Bridgewater Historical Museum that originally existed in one wing of the Memorial Building. Numerous requests were made to preserve it but it seems to have disappeared during the last phases of the reconstruction of the front steps.

David and Marilee Hunt have a number of old town reports and other Bridgewater memorabilia to give away.

The historical display in the lower lobby of the library is on the Civil War and Bridgewater. David is looking for assistance in tracking down Grand Army of the Republic artifacts of the town for further display. The Bridgewater GAR consisted of Civil War vets from Bridgewater

and ran from 1892-1920. In the towns as vets passed on chapters transitioned into Sons of Union Veterans but we have no evidence of that happening in town. The location of our GAR records may shed further light on that. There will be a GAR Flea Market at the Rockland GAR Hall on March 26. Somebody should try to attend and see if we could track down our Bridgewater GAR items.

Geoff reported on Historical Commission business the CPC

Meeting was adjourned at 6.45

Next meeting will be on April 18, 2023 at 6 PM

Note:

David and Matt did attend and a few leads were picked up of the existence of the Bridgewater GAR Post 205 materials. They were looking for the Post Banner, roster book, flag, and about a half dozen old muskets. Seema as though were found in an attic of a house on Maple Ave about 15 years ago and then were given to Dean Sargent, an active member of the Rockland GAR. On his passing, some of the material was sold through eBay through Whites Auction in Middleboro. Whites stated that they only sold some GAR pin collections but they never saw rifles or the GAR roster book. The post closed in 1920 so David is searching state archives for the possible existence of it. Mr. Sargent's family may have sold the weapons to other buyers along with his collection. David found one rifle in the town Fire Department safe. He will contact the library director to see if it can be displayed with the current Civil War display.