

Stockbridge Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting of April 14, 2022

A public meeting of the Stockbridge Historical Commission (SHC) was held at the Town Offices on April 14, 2022, beginning at 10:00 AM. Notice of the meeting was duly posted by the Town Clerk at least two business days before the meeting. Present for the SHC were Chair Linda Jackson, Clerk Peter Williams and Maria Carr, constituting all members of the SHC. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Canales.

Approval of Minutes

The Commission approved as final the draft minutes of its meetings of March 24, 2021 and May 24, 2021 that Mr. Williams had circulated before the meeting.

Chime Tower Restoration

Michael Canales provided an overview. The plan has been and remains to send out bid requests in June to have work begin in the fall. EDM (our engineering consultant) will work with Michael to prepare the bid package. EDM will focus on the bid package for the masonry and the cupola work. MC will do a separate bid package for the interior (the bell-related work and the clock; the clock work will be an add-on alternate to maximize flexibility). Verdin will be specifically invited to bid, but the bid package also will be published. If anyone else bids, MC will bring in the SHC to review that bidder. MC also will keep the masonry as an add-on to maximize flexibility. Even though the Town Meeting approved a generous allotment (\$650,000), costs are higher due to all of the factors widely known today. Indeed, there is even a danger that no one will bid at this time. Optimistically, the time line is: Construction beginning after Labor Day and continuing over the winter and into the spring, hoping to have completion in the late spring of 2023. The bells would be removed at an early stage, then the main roof work would be done, and then the racking system and the bells would be reinstalled.

The Commission then discussed the question whether the restoration should be for the present 11 bells (as opposed to adding more bells, or possibly removing the 11th bell that was added in 1975). After discussion the SHC voted unanimously that the project should be to restore the bell system as is. Ms. Jackson requested assurance if for any reason the 11th bell cannot remain in the rack that the bell will be preserved.

Ms. Jackson stated that, when the project is finished, it would be desirable to have a small historical display inside at the lowest level. (Maria is working on a history documenting every monument and plaque in the town. It is in the final editing stage. It includes about a page on the Chime Tower, with photographs.) Ms. Jackson suggested that the Field family should be included in a dedication ceremony when the Tower is completed. Maria noted that a significant dedication ceremony was held in 1975 when the 11th bell was added.

Mr. Canales stated that EDM would be the project overseer. Engineering is exempt from procurement regulations, and thus we can retain them by choice given their experience and prior work on this project. They also would oversee Verdin's work.

In reply to a question, Mr. Canales stated that there is no plan now to replace Chris Marsden, as his title was particular to his experience; instead, his former work will be divided among other Town employees. Rich Atwood will take care of the cemetery. Scott Muir is taking over Emergency Management. Hugh Page is the Highway Superintendent; he has taken over some of Chris M's work, including keeping an eye on the Tower. The Highway Foreman will be the more day-to-day person; he was just hired, Carm [LNU]. The Highway Department is now fully up to staff.

George Washington Commemoration Plaque

Ms. Carr noted that there was a small plaque that was in front of the Town Offices – it was a plaque that was a tribute to George Washington; part of a nationwide celebration of Washington that occurred at the time of the plaque. Ms. Jackson suggested that Mr. Canales attempt to find the plaque, which is thought to be in Mr. Marsden's former office.

Soldiers' Monument Restoration

Mr. Canales stated that Amanda Trienens (of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Chatham) has prepared bid specifications for the final work on the Monument. That bid package will go out soon. Ms. Jackson stated that it would be nice also to have a ceremony after that project is complete.

Town Cemetery Restoration

The Commission has seen the report of Preservation, Inc. The funds for the recommended restoration work are on the agenda for Town Meeting. The request will be for the full amount estimated by Preservation, Inc., plus some allowances for higher costs, etc. Mr. Canales noted that he will be meeting with PI to discuss matters that might affect what needs to be bid under procurement law, particularly relating to potential purchases. It is unclear whether the work can start this season or next season. Mr. Canales said that he could meet with the SHC in June to update the Commission on this project.

Stone Arch Bridge Restoration

Mr. Canales stated that Foresight Engineering is revisiting the report that it submitted in 2015. The Massachusetts Historical Commission, which has oversight power having funded the report, in 2016 rejected Foresight's 2015 proposed plan (MHC letter attached hereto). Foresight will consider a new proposed approach to run by the SHC. It is a challenge under Massachusetts law to determine how the bridge could be restored in a way to permit vehicles on the bridge. Mass Highway will only provide funding for a Chapter 85 bridge. Mr. Canales noted that the fact that the bridge has been closed means that it can reopen now only consistent with modern structural requirements. It may be that the bridge will have to become only a pedestrian bridge. Foresight's charge originally was to prepare a restoration plan so that the bridge could be open to automobiles. But the MHC did not approve the concept that Foresight came up with. Because we took funding from the state, the \$50K for Foresight's report and related work, we must have MHC approval for any plan. There is a danger that the bridge will collapse if nothing happens. The SHC noted that there have been unduly long gaps in attention to this matter. Mr. Canales noted that Town bridges now are inspected every two years.

The Tuckerman Bridge on Glendale Middle Road is in danger of being closed, and this is a major focus of Mr. Canales at this time. Some work also needs to be done on the Butler Bridge. The goal is to stay ahead of the bridges' maintenance and to prevent closures. Mr. Canales believes that a stone arch bridge would cost about \$6.5 million (2015 estimate); there was a 2015 estimate of \$1.7 million for Foresight's proposed facade stone arch bridge that would satisfy Chapter 85. Foresight will try to identify one or more viable options. The SHC is very interested in seeing a revised proposal from Foresight. Mr. Canales will keep the SHC posted.

Averic Road Bridge

Ms. Carr inquired what happened to the old railings and posts on the Averic Bridge. Mr. Canales stated that he thinks the Highway Department has retained the posts. However, the plan for the Bridge restoration is not to reuse the posts. Ms. Carr suggested that posts and any fencing might be reused for decorative purposes in the park there, which is the site of the foundry where they were made. Mr. Canales will keep the SHC posted.

New Business

Ms. Jackson reported that there are stakes in the ground up by the Laurel Hill rostrum. Mr. Canales does not know about them; that land is privately owned by LHA. Ms. Jackson will check with Pat Flinn of the LHA.

The SHC expressed great appreciation for Mr. Canales' updates and his attention to the Town-owned historic resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Dated: Stockbridge, Massachusetts
April 20, 2022

Peter C. Williams
Peter C. Williams
Clerk

Attachment: June 6, 2016 Letter from MHC re Curtisville Stone Arch Bridge



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

June 6, 2016

Jorja-Ann Marsden
Town Administrator
Town of Stockbridge
50 Main Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262-0417

Re: Curtisville Stone Bridge, Stockbridge, MA (Emergency Pre-development Grant)

Dear Ms. Marsden:

Massachusetts Historical Commission staff have reviewed the proposed designs prepared by JDB Consulting Engineers in conjunction with the emergency MPPF- partially funded study for the Curtisville Stone Bridge. Design Options 1 and 2, as originally presented, as well as the revised alternative most recently received by the MHC were all reviewed for compliance with the Secretary of the Interiors, Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI-STHP). Among the expressed requirements for this study and its conclusions was full compliance with the SOI-STHP. The Curtisville Stone Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element in the Old Curtisville Historic District.

The Curtisville Stone Bridge was constructed in 1842 as a dry lain stone arch bridge. In 1980, the Town of Stockbridge received federal grant-in-aid funding from the Massachusetts Historical Commission for the partial funding of the repair of the Curtisville Stone Bridge. Milton Graton Associates of Ashland, New Hampshire completed the bridge repairs in 1982. All work was overseen by Martin Lowenfish AIA, of Southlawn Ave. New York. The project work, which involved the hand rebuilding of the majority of the un-coursed stone bridge and associated wing walls, strictly maintained the historical integrity of the dry lain bridge. Stone joints were reconstructed without the use of mortar, thereby retaining the key original quality of this bridge.

Attached you will find a copy of the *Guidelines for Historic Bridge Maintenance and Rehabilitation* (Based on the SOI-STHP) prepared by the Virginia Transportation Research Council in 2001 in its *Management Plan for Historic Bridges in Virginia*. These ten basic principles were created to help preserve the distinctive character of historic bridges in the State of Virginia, however, these same Guidelines can easily be applied to all historic bridges. These Guidelines have been recognized by other states as well as by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Of these ten guidelines, item #'s 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9 all relate closely to the maintaining of the character-defining qualities or elements of a bridge including its distinctive engineering and construction techniques as well as maintaining the original design, texture and other visual qualities of the historic bridge.

The Curtisville Stone Bridge study report recommendations call for the use of an independent span over the existing bridge, which complies with the SOI-STHP and Guidelines for Historic Bridge Maintenance and Rehabilitation. However, the report also calls for the use of drilled steel bars set in epoxy bonding adhesive

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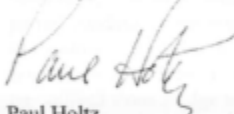
in the arched sections and the addition of setback mortar in the existing un-mortared joints (throughout the bridge) which are both not in keeping with those same Standards. The MHC has been in contact with the Environmental Services Division of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation as well as with Structures North Engineering and both parties agree that there are less invasive methods of repair available that would maintain the distinctive construction techniques and appearance of the Curtisville Stone Bridge while also providing for the full capacity loading desired by the Town of Stockbridge.

There are undoubtedly multiple options for design solutions for the repair of the Curtisville Stone Bridge in Stockbridge. The Curtisville Stone Bridge study report has offered design aspects which the MHC is concerned are not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards (including the Virginia Bridge Guidelines) and that would adversely impact the overall historical integrity and the character-defining features which originally qualified this historic bridge for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

As was previously indicated in the May 31, 2016 email from Tracey Fortier, Preservation Planner, to Steve Mack, Foresight Land Services, the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the development of a less invasive design solution for the repair and upgrade of the Curtisville Stone Bridge. However, given that the study has most likely already exhausted available budgeted design time, the MHC is willing to allow the study report (with designs as presented) to be finalized. Once the MPPF project completion report is filed, including all necessary financial documentation and the recorded preservation restriction agreement, reimbursement of the emergency MPPF grant to the Town of Stockbridge can occur.

Please be aware that the MHC will hold a preservation restriction agreement, as the result of this project, which will ensure the MHC review and approval authority for a period of ten years for all proposed work to the bridge prior to the start of any construction activity. In addition, the MHC will also be provided with a regulatory review beyond the 10-year period of the preservation restriction agreement if there is federal and/or state funding permitting or licensing involved in a future Curtisville Stone Bridge project.

Sincerely,



Paul Holtz
Historical Architect
Co-Director Grants Division
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

Cc: Steve Shatz, Town of Stockbridge
Stockbridge Historical Commission