



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

Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Meeting Time: 3:00 P.M.

Meeting Place: Historical Commission Room, Town Hall

Present: Sandi Jarvis, John Garvey, Rita Furlong, Gail Kusek      Absent: Katherine Hoak

1. Call to order: 3:08 P.M.
2. April 2019 Minutes approved.
3. Treasurer's Report: Balance: \$2,924.07
4. Communications:

a. Old

i. Rita sent Peter Hiam an extra booklet we had titled "Becket's First Fifty Years, 1752- 1802 as voted on at the previous meeting. Sandi also scanned this booklet and one titled "Sons of Becket" for computer accessibility.

ii. Sandi located information on the Hay's Farm Ski Slope/Snow Train in the 1939 WPA American Guide Series, The Berkshire Hills, which states that it was located across Route 8, west of where the Transfer Station is now located. She sent this information to Mike Steben.

iii. Christine Emerson previously had requested information on a Harris land transfer following a move to Ohio about 1820. Sandi sent her a reference titled:  
<https://www.portage.ancestralsites.com/hist002.htm> .

b. New

i. Committee voted to sign off on the Town Building Inspector's notification of a request to "remove two poorly constructed additions on the building at 43 Pleasant Street and to further remodel and restore the two story house". Rita made a motion to allow. John seconded. Vote was 3-1. Sandi, John, and Rita voted in favor. Gail voted against. Sandi suggested we wait one week before notifying the building inspector so that Gail might have time to do more research on the proposal. We will discuss it at our next meeting.

ii. John Costello sent a photo of Green Water Lodge and is still seeking information. We will create a file of the information that he has given us about his family including the Broga

and Phelps families. He sent photos and information about the filling stations along Greenwater Pond. John and Sandi found 1858 and 1876 Becket maps of the showing Houston near Greenwater Pond. Sandi also found several Berkshire Eagle articles that mention the Greenwater Lodge and family references in Becket directories she shared with John Costello.

21 Sep 1931 - Cars Collide near Greenwater lodge injuring “an 11-year-old boy lying on the grass near the highway.”

14 Jul 1943 - Chester couple observe 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, parents of Mrs. Lillian Houston of Greenwater Lodge, Becket.

6 Aug 1934 - Fred Stone stage star spent the week-end at Greenwater Lodge on Greenwater Pond, on Jacob's Ladder.

14 Nov 1939 - Ladies' Aid Society supper at Mrs. F. C. Houston's Greenwater Lodge.

iii. Jack Kelly asked about any additional information on Becket Mountain Fire Lookout, supposedly on the Cordonier property around 1912-1915. Rita will create a paper file on the information that he sent us:

“My name is Jack Kelley, and I'm a part of the Forest Fire Lookout Association's Massachusetts chapter. The FFLA is dedicated to the preservation and researching of fire lookouts, just like the one that used to stand on Becket Mountain. I've done a lot of research into the former tower, and have come up with some interesting information I'm happy to share with you, but still would like to know more. I know it was a 38' steel tower with a 12'x12' base and an 8'x8' wooden cab accessed by a ladder. It was built in 1912 on the property of a "Mr. Cordonier" who owned the mountain, with his permission. The fire observer for that year was Thomas R. Buxton, and he began his work on July 11, 1912. The 1913 fire observer was James S. Rose, and 1914 was Charles Kimball, who had the honor of seeing the first moose of that summer when it passed by the base of the lookout. The fourth and final observer at the tower was Edward J. McIntyre for the 1915 fire season, during which he spotted few fires due to rainy weather. With the construction of another fire tower on Lenox Mountain in Lenox that same year, the tower on Becket Mountain was no longer needed, and was removed from the summit and rebuilt on Lair Mountain in Tolland. While I am happy to have uncovered this information from my research, I'm still missing a few things, namely, a photograph of the lookout, or any historical photographs of the mountain in general, along with any information on the fire observers themselves aside from their names. If anyone at the Commission could help me out with acquiring any of this information, I'd greatly appreciate it.”

iv. Eunice Olean of Alford, who was a Camp Chimney Corners Counselor in WWII, would like assistance in writing a memoir about her summers in Becket as a child. Town secretary, Beverly Gilbert, has contacted someone she knows that might be of service to Eunice.

v. Received from John Lambert a copy of a 1776 map. Rita will have it scanned and a copy framed.

vi. Member John Garvey donated two postcards. One is of Bucksteep in Washington and one is of a Ballou Purifying Pump.

vii. Sandi learned that older microfiche/film projectors are sometimes sought after by genealogists. She also took six of our microfilms of early Becket history to the Berkshire Athenaeum to try and get them copied into PDF file form. The Athenaeum consented to allow them to be copied for free, saving Becket several hundred dollars per roll. They will be returned to us when all six have been copied. John moved that we allow a copy to be kept at the Berkshire Athenaeum. Gail seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Sandi will contact Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen about sharing with the Berkshire and Becket Athenaeums and see about posting the pdf files on the town website.

#### 5. Old Business:

a. Our supply order for mylar sheets has arrived. Rita donated two rolls of double sided tape.

b. Sandi and John, sub-committee to research sign for 21 Maple Street property, reported that a bronze placque would cost approximately \$1,100-\$1,200 online. Richard Atwood, of AA Cemetary Services in Great Barrington, would order and install it for \$1,200.00 plus \$600.00 to carve out a recessed area in which to place the placque. The Placque will read:

NORTH BECKET VILLAGE NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

21 MAPLE STREET

A NEW ENGLAND GREEK REVIVAL STYLE BUILDING BUILT CIRCA 1850

- 1857-1926-Served as the Baptist Parsonage for nearly seventy years, until the First Baptist Church of Becket and the North Congregational Church joined in federation.
- 1926-2002-The Federated Baptist Church continued to use it as a parsonage for almost another sixty years, later renting it, until eventually selling it for a private home.
- 2016-2018-The Town of Becket purchased the property and demolished the building.

Gail made a motion to use up to \$2,000.00 to contract with Richard Atwood of AA Cemetary Services to perform this work. John seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Sandi wrote a wonderful article for the Becket Bulletin about our new showcases and some of the items that are being housed there and in the one upstairs in the Becket Room. She also placed a request for new members in the Bulletin.

d. Office organization: No action at this time.

e. Plan of Action: No action.

f. Goals: No action.

g. “ Welcome to Becket” pole flags are tabled until plaque is paid for then an assessment of our treasury balance will determine whether we pursue the purchase of new flags.

6. New business:

a. Local Landmark Ordinance: No action taken.

b. It was noted that the Federated Church in North Becket has installed vinyl siding without us having been notified. The building does not look as historic as prior to the installation of the vinyl. The building inspector has given us the web site where there is a list of all such requests and expects that we should check there to see of such requests ourselves.

7. Next Meeting- June 11 at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita Furlong, secretary pro-tem