



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

**Meeting Date:** December 10, 2019

**Meeting Time:** 3 PM

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

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

### **Minutes**

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:06 PM.
2. The minutes of the November, 2019 meeting were, after Rita so motioned and Sandi seconded, unanimously accepted.
3. Treasurer's Report: A \$12 payment was made to the Federated Church for our inclusion in their town calendar, leaving a balance of \$2,005, with the possibility of an additional \$2,425 from last's year's balance.
4. New Business
  - a. Jenn Beatty, now the Acting Executive Director of the Becket Arts Center, was our guest. (There are three co-presidents.)
    - a. She alerted the HC to the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Arts Center, founded in 1970. Jenn invited the HC to create a historical presentation about the original Seminary Hall and development of North Becket in the mid 1800's, for the Art Centers Exploration series in the 2020 season. It was agreed the HC would prepare a presentation furthering our goal to publicize Becket's history and the work of the HC.
    - b. The Art Center co-presidents requested our writing a letter of support for the Center's need to protect its' building. Currently, it has no heat and little air conditioning, and so would like to acquire heat pumps. It was agreed individual commissioners would write a letter. In addition, a letter would be sent on behalf of the Commission in support of the Becket Art Center maintaining the town owned, historic building.
5. Communications
  - a. Old – Caroga Museum, Tanneries; request for biographical info on Jonathan Whitney Wheeler, partner with Addison Hull Bidwell and Governor William

Claflin in the lumber and tannery business in Becket; Newspapers.com research, courtesy Gale Andrade who helped Sandi with the genealogy of Jonathan Whitney Wheeler.

b. New –

- i. We were alerted to a new virus threat by Beverly Gilbert and Ken Bilodeau. This can come into effect when ISO files are used, so the town has blocked their usage.
- ii. A portrait of Helen Francis Day (1911-1999), owned by Charlie and Joy Flint, has been offered to the town by them. Ms. Day lived in Becket for 50 years after her marriage to Becket resident Carl McNerney Flynn in 1941. Her father was the American artist, Francis (James Francis) Day (1863-1942.) He painted the Portrait of Helen Day Flynn (Age 16), his daughter in 1927. It is an oil on artist board, size: 15" x 12", with original gold leaf carved frame.
- iii. Eliza R. Snow's birthplace in Becket provoked much discussion among us. We wondered if there was proof she was born in the Fred Snow House. Or did it occur in either, the homes of her grandfather Oliver II or father, Oliver III? She was a Mormon poet & leader who was married to Joseph Smith, founder of the Latter Day Saint movement, and after his death Snow married Brigham Young, again as a plural wife. Many Becket residents moved to Ohio in the early 1800's, including the young Eliza and her family. Jenn & Aaron own the H. Cerelia Snow house. The HC received an email from Jill Derr in this regard and Sandi responded to her.
- iv. There will be an all-day planning session January 11 (or 25, snow day) on the grant which will allow our town to create a Municipality Vulnerability Plan. We will then be able to work on updating Becket's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Meredyth Babcock will preside. Gail was appointed to represent our Commission, with Rita as the alternate.
- v. Work needs to be done on the article for the Town Report which is due January 31, 2020, to be given to Beverly Gilbert by that time.
- vi. The 1933 Berkshire County Phone Book, a pdf., was sent to us by Roger Gillette and has been downloaded to the HC computer.

6. Old Business

- a. Signs for Ballou Park (including the sign by the obelisk which contains the names of those from Becket who fought in the War of 1812, and Civil War) and Becket Center need to be replaced because of their poor condition. John will look into the company which made signs for Chester. The name of that company is not yet readily available.
- b. & c. Goals and Plans of Action: we have a worksheet entitled "Historical Commission Goals and Actions for Discussion" to refer to in an ongoing

fashion. One of our especially important goals is help with our computer system and, hopefully, replacement of critical parts of it.

d. 21 Maple Street-plaque: The plaque has been made, but it needs to be put on hold for placement until the spring.

e. "Welcome to Becket" pole flags need to be put on hold, too, until the spring.

f. Office organization will continue as it is possible.

7. The next meeting was originally scheduled to be held on January 14, 2020, but we moved to cancel this because several members expect to be away. Sandi will email us with information we may need in the meantime. Our next meeting will be on Feb. 11, 2020.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Katherine Hoak, clerk

Sandi Jarvis, chair