Monuments & Memorials Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 3, 2022
Conducted by Remote Participation
7:00 PM

Members Present
Linda Dixon, Chair; Avram Baskin, Glen Bassett, Bebe Fallick, Chuck French, George Gamota, Leslie Masson, Charles Price

Members Not Present
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Guests
Doug Lucente, Vice Chair, Select Board
Judy Baldasaro, GIS/Database Administrator, Town of Lexington

Business
Chair Linda Dixon convened the meeting at 7:21 p.m. as a result of a Zoom link problem.

Approval of Minutes of February 3, 2022
Upon motion moved and seconded, the minutes of February 3, 2022, were approved by roll call vote.

Presentation from Judy Baldasaro, GIS/Database Administrator, Town of Lexington
Chuck French introduced Judy Baldasaro. The Town IT department has accepted the Monuments & Memorials database as part of the Town's GIS mapping infrastructure. Storing monuments and memorials in public records will help to locate and protect them.

The Monuments and Memorials Committee website now has a "You Can Help" link where community volunteers can add information about a monument or memorial. Ms. Baldasaro demonstrated how that data, once it is entered into the system, creates a GIS icon on the Town map showing its precise location. This in turn leads to an information page with a photo and text about the monument. We have a lot of work to do before we identify and catalogue all the monuments and memorials in town, but we are off to a very good start with this foundation.

A very enthusiastic discussion followed. Committee members were impressed with the progress that has been made and all thanked Ms. Baldasaro for her work on the Committee's behalf.

Chair Dixon mentioned that Wei Ding, a professor of computer science at UMass Boston who visited with this committee last Fall, has assembled a computer sciences student group who would like to join this effort as a community service project. The students would need some specialized computer training to provide effective help on the database project. Wei Ding is proposing that the Monuments and Memorials Committee and her group jointly apply for a modest grant (+/-$2000) from the Community Endowment of Lexington (CEL) to pay a programming expert to train the students. The deadline to apply is March 18. Doug Lucente, Select Board Liaison, approved this action.

A motion was moved and seconded to apply for a CEL grant. By roll call vote, the motion was carried. Chair Dixon will prepare the grant application with Wei Ding.

Judy Baldasaro is willing to help this combined group. Dawn McKenna, Tourism Committee Chair, stated that opportunities to encourage more usage are always welcome at the Visitors Center.

Policies & Procedures Manual
Tourism Committee, Historical Commission, and the Lexington Center Committee have agreed to review our manual and share their feedback, which will be reviewed by the Policies and Procedures subcommittee.

Member Discussion: LexSeeHer Final Report
Within the past week, committee members received a comprehensive report from the LexSeeHer Steering Committee that detailed the history and scope of the project from its inception to the present day. Chair Dixon asked committee members for their reactions, questions, or concerns about the report and the project in general.

Glen Bassett. Regarding the suitability of the memorial, LexSeeHer has done a great job justifying the need and producing a beautiful memorial. He has all he needs to vote. The location however, is an open item. We are obligated to hear the Tourism Committee's assessment and can't move forward without that. (Tourism will vote on March 31.)

Chuck French: Confirming that the Select Board won't issue a building permit until 100% of costs are in place.
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Charlie Price: His main complaint is wording. Feels LexSeeHer treats slavery as gently as possible, i.e., using the term "enslaved persons." Massachusetts had slaves and was the first colony to make slavery legal in 1641. "Call them slaves, not enslaved persons. Don't smooth it over. LexSeeHer "doesn't tell the story as strongly as it should be told."

Bebe Fallick: Sees an attitude of presumption throughout the report. *Ad hominem* attacks on other committee chairs. The Town Meeting resolution was not a mandate.   Photo perspectives unclear.

Glen: urges committee to focus on preparing us to make recommendations to Select Board, rather than critique the report.

Bebe: Loves the monument, great treatment of the women to be honored. but finds the approach and methodology flawed. Feels a lot of disrespect shown throughout the process; often worked outside regular town government channels; acted, then asked forgiveness after the fact.

Glen: Reminder, this is an unofficial report. What matters is: How can we fulfill our mission to the Select Board?

Linda: Let's focus on things that we feel must be resolved before we can vote. Even if there are things in report that bother us, ignore them if they won't impact your vote.

Linda: It's possible the Historic Districts Commission work might not be finished. Possibly the February 14 subcommittee meeting should have been a public meeting. Also, there is a question about lighting.

Chuck, Charlie, Bebe, George: Concern about the new rotation of the monument. This was done after the M&M Committee meeting of March 3. To avoid confusion, all agreed we should have only the final version of their proposal at voting time.

Bebe: Shows the importance of having a Policies and Procedures manual.

Linda: would like to follow up on reference to Emery Park being full. According to Doug Lucente, this item did not come up on a Select Board agenda.

Jessie Steigerwald made a public comment addressing Charlie Price's slavery concerns. LexSeeHer consulted several people and did their best to treat the slavery issue with utmost sensitivity. They would welcome a chance to discuss this further.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. by roll call vote. Next meeting: April 7, 2022- 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bebe Fallick, Secretary