

Hollis Heritage Commission

Town of Hollis, Hollis, NH 03049

Date: 27 April, 2021

Members Present: Honi Glover, Wendy Trimble, Karla Vogel, Doug Nye, Sharon McCaffrey, Michael Bates, David Sullivan, Susan Benz, Aurelia Perry

Members Absent: Jan Larmouth

Meeting: Called to order: 7:03pm. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: March 2021

Approved with amendments – motion by Honi; 2nd by Sharon.

*** Please see addendum attachments to these minutes: research regarding Cooper Shop origins ***

Business: Welcoming Sharon, now officially a member, and Cassandra, to her first meeting! We are delighted to have them.

Calendar: Letters have gone out to all of our sponsors, and checks are starting to come in. Months are filling up! Wendy has put out more reminders on Hollis Facebook pages for photographs. We are still considering whether to up our regular print run of 400 calendars to 450 or 500. We are also discussing whether the price will remain \$10.

Drive-It Day: We are considering starting at the Lawrence Barn, having a nice drive, and ending at the Gambrel Barn for social-distancing picnicking. Karla suggested possibly touring the Farley Building as a middle destination. We are looking at June 5th, starting at the Lawrence Barn at 9:30am, having a mini car show for half an hour next to the Heritage Commission Cooper Shop foundation. Following that, we'll have about an hour drive, stopping at either the Farley Building and/or the Gambrel Barn. We will ask for a donation to sign up to join the event; as usual, there will be waiver forms to be signed.

Old Home Days: September 11. We don't yet know how extensive the celebration will be able to be, this year, with the pandemic, but we want to at least join the parade.

Cooper Shop: Dave and Doug have been up to the White Barn to look at the available materials. They will continue to review the original timbers, as well as the replacements donated by Honi, and begin laying out the plan. Karla has the contact information of a few people who were interested in assisting, and will reach out to them.

History of the Cooper Shop: With difficult and painstaking logistics, the Noah Dow Cooper Shop was dismantled and put into storage 14 years ago. Wendy reports that within the past couple of weeks it has been brought to our attention via a 3rd-party e-mail that the landowners who were going to demolish the Cooper Shop are now disappointed in and hurt by the lack of recognition for their 'donation' to the Town. The landowners have also approached some of the Selectmen regarding their grievance. Wendy went through the HHC meeting minutes from that time, newspaper notices, and records, to understand how the Cooper Shop came to the attention and ultimately the conservatorship of the HHC. In 2006, Mr. and Mrs. Billingsley applied for a demolition permit for the Cooper Shop, original to their property. The HHC heard about the demolition, asked if they may preserve the building,

and were declined by the Billingsleys – who wanted the structure gone without interference and had already arranged a deadline for the demolition. Further exploration with the Selectmen determined that the building was unsafe where it was; it was not feasible to preserve it in its original location. Nevertheless, word of an original cooper shop, hardly changed or touched by time, spread throughout the state; preservationists wanted to photograph the structure, and raised awareness of the possibility of moving it and saving it. Various acrobatics ensued, including Release of Liability documents; purchase of the building from the Billingsleys for \$1 by David Sullivan; newspaper involvement; a notarized, 3-page insurance waiver to cover the Billingsleys for any responsibility; a blog about trying to save the historic building; a rush to take the Cooper Shop down in late November before the Billingsleys' hard-and-fast December 1st demolition; continual refusals to delay demolition. Newspapers documented the tremendous volunteer effort, spearheaded by Honi Glover and David Sullivan, put forth to save the historic structure in the face of unrelenting landowners and imminent destruction. Once the Noah Dow Cooper Shop was finally, successfully and heroically documented, dismantled, and safe in storage, David Sullivan donated the historic building to the Town for the purpose of its ultimate re-erection and restoration. The large volunteer effort did not include the Billingsleys, who additionally did not allow driveway access or volunteer parking at the time of the dismantling and were adamant that their property be left in an untouched condition following what was a great inconvenience to them. (Their neighbors did allow volunteer parking.)

Dave pointed out that many of the hard-working volunteers, particularly Honi Glover, should be the ones receiving any public recognition for saving the Cooper Shop, rather than those who wanted nothing to do with it but destroy it. Dave further pointed out that the work to restore and raise the building has been going on for nearly 14 years, and is not over; this is an odd time for a demand for recognition – let alone thanks for something clearly being misremembered.

Doug suggested that when the building is completed, there be a small plaque installed inside to list all the volunteers who helped save and resurrect it. The original road location of the building is well-known, and will always be part of its history. Frankly, the Billingsleys provided no donation and no cooperation – but in the face of outside historical outcry reluctantly allowed what they wanted destroyed to be taken away for preservation, as long as it in no way affected them, delayed the demolition, or touched their property otherwise for any length of time.

Susan will speak with Mark LeDoux regarding the “recognition” and gratitude issue, which Mark has recently broached to Susan. Wendy has offered to illustrate her findings on the situation for Mark and the Selectmen, with her substantial research and documentation.

Woodmont Properties: Huge thank-you to Doug, who got the rutted parking area at Woodmont graded! It is now in much better condition. Additionally, since Doug fixed the storyboard signs with washer buffers, the humidity has not been an issue, and the informative boards look great.

Doug brought up the question of installing a couple of picnic tables for the Woodmont area; we will look into whether that would be within the purview of the usage of the place. Susan pointed out that any resulting garbage might be the only concern.

Hollis Historic District Commission: Michael reports that there haven't been any new applications; rebuilding on the Main St. property that was recently demolished is the only big thing that is being looked at.

Farley Building: Karla reports that the committee hasn't had official meetings lately, in favor of meeting with consultants regarding restoration. They are continuing to look at cost and procedure for renovation for offices and ongoing function.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm. Motion by Doug, 2nd by Aurelia.

Next Meeting to be held at 7pm in the Community Room, Tuesday, May 25.

Respectfully submitted by Aurelia Perry.

Email received from Liz to Susan – bringing it to my attention...

Hi Susan,

Lee-Ann and Brandon Billingsley donated the cooper shop to the Heritage Committee. She has been so affected by the lack of recognition for the donation. She grew up in Hollis and raised her kids here. According to her, they donated the building because it was unsafe for kids using that corner as a bus stop.

I hope that their donation of such a historic building will be noted and praised within the literature and in any public recognition of the building itself. Doing so will help to raise awareness and highlight the importance of preserving these buildings. While it would have been ideal to keep the building in place at its original location, the donation of the building has created a wonderful living museum that is accessible to people in a way that it never would have been had it been kept on private land.

Thank you for looking into this and for all the work the Heritage Committee does to preserve our heritage and promote that preservation within our community.

Lee-Ann and Brandon Billingsley 465-6067 home phone.

**The History of the "donation" of the Cooper Shop to the Town and HHC
As documented in BOS minutes, HHC minutes, blog, and newspaper articles.**

September 2006, Mr. & Mrs. Billingsley applied for a demo permit to demolish the Cooper shop not long after purchasing the property. As the Heritage Commission documents all the buildings to be demolished, they asked if they could save the building and they were told the deadline for demolition was set for Dec 1. In October 2006 at a BOS meeting, it was decided that as the Town could not offer any insurance to protect volunteers taking it down, then the Heritage could not save it.

November 2006 at HHC meeting, minutes state a John Butler from Bennett Street School would like to save the building and use it as a school project but could not do this until spring 2007. They would have wanted to document it, take it down piece by piece and rebuild it. This offer was refused as the deadline for demolition was Dec 1. The Billingsley did allow John Butler to take photos and he was very impressed with it as "it remains as it was" and "has not been tampered with".

At this point, Dave Sullivan a resident living nearby contacted Honi Glover and offered to help save it. He purchased it for \$1. Through the help of Vahrij Manoukian a liability agreement was drawn up, that both parties signed. Mr and Mrs Billingsley signed a Release of Liability document with Dave Sullivan. These documents were notarized by Vahrij Manoukian. Honi Glover rallied up volunteers and they all signed the Certification of Assent to Terms by Volunteers Involved in the Project.

Several newspapers ran the story, documenting photographs of the Cooper Shop as it was taken down by the volunteers. Bridget Sullivan began a blog and documented each day, listing those that helped and how they helped.

Work started on Wednesday November 23rd, and the weather was wet and did not look good for the coming days. The group asked for an extension to the demolition deadline but were denied. No work was done on Thanksgiving Day, but work resumed in earnest on Friday November 24th. Family, friends, and lots of passersby stopped to see what was going on many bringing food and drinks to the volunteers. November 27th and 28th Dick Marvell used his forklift to move the granite stones, 10 pieces. **November 29th** was clean up day and Roger Saunders arranged with Doug Orde to fill in and grade the area where the foundation hole was. All done just before the deadline date. Hollis Times ran an article on **Dec 6 2006**, with a number of photographs. It stated that the Heritage Commission had mounted a

tremendous volunteer effort to save the building due to be demolished on Dec 1. This paper listed several of the volunteers who worked tirelessly over thanksgiving weekend.

All the materials removed where stored on Dave Sullivan's property for a time. Then on **June 4th, 2007** at a BOS meeting Dave Sullivan read a letter, stating he would like to donate the 'Noah Dow Cooper Shop' to the town with the hope that the building would be reconstructed on town land and used as an educational museum. He requested that the HHC would be the stewards of this historic building. Moved by Mark LeDoux and seconded by David Petry that the Selectmen gratefully accept the donation of the Noah Dow cooper Shop to the Heritage Commission on behalf of the Town.

It appears from this that the Billingsley had no desire to donate the building to save it but just that they wanted it demolished. It was those volunteers that rallied around over a busy thanksgiving week that saved the building. It was spear headed by Honi and Dave and Dave later donated it to the town. There was no cost to the Billingsley at all and their property was left clean and tidy.

Now after 14 years this question of recognition has been raised.

Thanks to Brandon and Leeann Billingsley's desire to tear down this historic building, with their willingness to have volunteers sign an indemnity agreement, and access their property, a small army of volunteers stepped forward to save the Noah Dow Cooper Shop from certain destruction which would have erased this part of Hollis History forever.

Thanks to the volunteers.....

Honi Glover

Dave Sullivan

Rodger and Adie Saunders

Kim Kellner

Steve Reynolds

Maryann Wesoly

Gail and Bob Maloney

Gerry Walsh

Lee Harrington

Mark Sullivan

Tim Desclos

Mark and Zachary Metea

Nancy and Chip Desrosiers

Michael Sullivan

Robert Sullivan

Brad and Ian Buchanan

Bridget, Jimmy and Sean Sullivan

Steve and Marcus Roche

Chip Harris

Dan Porier

Chris Cahill

Dirk Smith

Clarck Lambert

Diane Sullivan

John Butler

Doug Orde