

Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Process

Historical Resources

June 8, 2009

Board Attendance:

Patrice Putman

Sarah Fuller

Ken Johnson

Brian Ketchen

Kristen Bartlett

Harold Burnett

Jack Kaiser

Phil Locashio

Cornell Knight

Jim Norris

John Callinah

John Carpenter

Community attendance: Victoria Christopher, Don Beattie, Marion Healy, David Cook

7:00 pm – Meeting opens

Historic Resources

Patrice asked the group to compile a list of places that Winthrop should protect. The following were identified:

- Mt. Pisgah Fire Tower
- Police Station/Towle Academy
- Morrill House
- Schools
- Churches Municipal Buildings
- Grange Hall
- Cemeteries
- Trolley lines & Buildings oriented to them

- Old Homes

In addition to those already listed on the historic registry:

- Library
- Cobbossee Lighthouse
- Bailey Apts.

Cornell Knight confirmed that historic town records are currently kept in back room of the town hall. They have been treated for mold. CD-ROMs of records from 1700s to 1892 have been made and a copy is kept in the library, but currently underutilized due to the need to reformat them to a more user-friendly format. In an easy-to-use format they could also be reproduced and used by the schools. A set of Microfilm is also available. The town was restoring two books of historic value a year at a cost of approx. \$1,000.00 each, however this was cut from this year's budget. Property records (historical maps and plans) are kept at a county level. There is interest in making these more available as a complement to town records.

It was noted that the town should look at the full history of Winthrop and be sure to save modern buildings and records of importance as well, so they may be preserved for the future.

The Winthrop Historical Society was discussed and David Cook informed the group that the Society hasn't met for approx. 15 years. There is a charter written up, however, and even money in the bank. The Society would only need to re-file for non-profit status. The differences between a private historical society and a public historical commission were discussed. There are benefits and draw-backs to both and it was mentioned that perhaps Winthrop would benefit from the formation of both, so they could work together in a complementary manner.

The rail road and trolley lines were discussed. An intermediate power building is one of the only things that remains of the trolley (currently someone's garage). Also one of the cabins at Cobbossee Cottages is part of an old trolley car. The land form of the trolley line still runs through woods on mostly private land. Snowmobile and ATV trails also use part of it.

Linda Mckee did oral histories with students several years ago. It is possible they are located at the High School, but this needs to be confirmed. Use historic commission/society as a format to acquire more oral histories. Victoria Christopher has previously put pictures of old Winthrop in the Advertiser with the caption "Do you remember this?" and received excellent responses from people. The town website could also be used to post photos and audio clips as well as people's comments. Don Beattie mentioned www.Docs.google.com as an alternative format to store media. The public can have access and even add their own photos and comments. Content would need to be monitored for accuracy.

The need of a building for storage of historic artifacts was discussed. Currently most items are in private ownership with no form of cataloging. Victoria Christopher had previously checked into what sort of building might be needed. Certain requirements must be met in order to store precious documents (for example: Pre-1861 needs a fire proof area. Climate Control, etc also needed if run it as a museum, however, if put into another town owned building (library, etc) the town would not need to meet all of the

same criteria. The permanent use of space in the library expansion was mentioned, but it was noted that space would already be limited in the new library, so only a few display cases would be possible. The town office was also mentioned as a possible location, however it was noted that tourism should be kept in mind when considering potential locations and the town office may not be ideal for this reason. The Carlton Woolen Mill was also mentioned as a possible site for an historic museum. The future of things such as the mill and the library are currently being decided though, so a need was seen to move on the idea of a museum location prior to the completion of the comprehensive planning process to avoid losing out on possible locales. Sarah Fuller took names of volunteers for the historic commission, and has agreed to recommend them at the next town council meeting.

In absence of a permanent home for a museum, a traveling exhibit of historical documents was discussed. This could be used as a fund raiser to acquire a permanent space. A Virtual tour of some places where public cannot go (private land, etc) could be used in conjunction with an actual tour.

Use of the museum format as a dynamic space where art, theater, etc. could be displayed was also discussed. A museum in the street including walking tours with signs, etc. was also of interest (See Hallowell as an example).

Old photographs and brochures could also be used as a means of promoting tourism, recreation, etc. Can incorporate museum in the street or museum in the trails as well. Trolley line and Old Homes can be connected to Recreation. There is a list of older homes is in the 1971 Bicentennial book, copies are in the town office vault.

The old lakeside resorts were mentioned, most all have been torn down (One remains under private ownership), but it is still important the preserve the historical aspects of the lake and it's importance to the region. It was mentioned that The Lady Maranacook was sunk in the lake in the 1950's. It is possible that people could go diving at the site (only 15' of water), but unsure if it would be a desirable dive site. Condition of the steamer after being burned?

David Cook made note of the Maine Memory Network...a state sponsored site that assists towns in setting up a site for photographs, etc. Minimal cost associated due to volunteer labor. David has plans to work on this next year with town/schools.

Archaeological Resources

Patrice ask that the group list any known historic and pre-historic sites. The following were noted:

- Cellar Holes- 2 from Hathaway Road- Eben Thomas, David Audette
- Bridge Abutment- extension of Turkey Lane- still a dirt Road-old Winthrop/Wayne Road
- Ruth Ault- Wayne Revolutionary cemetery in disrepair.
- Gold mine-Tallyrand Ridge- 1920's-50's.

Native American sites – Mostly under water due to dam. However there are two known locations with others possible.

- Outlet of Cobbosseecontee
- Big Island on Annabessacook Lake

Dave Cook will prepare a map of currently known and potential archaeological sites.

In some towns, before you put a water line in, etc., you must excavate to ensure that you are not destroying anything of historic value. The cost of this is a huge constraint. Winthrop could encourage public to voluntarily turn in artifacts that they find so it can be kept in public trust. Ensure that they are not discouraged by the possibility of their construction site being shut down.

The following recommendations were made during the meeting:

- Get a building for Historic Society, gather artifacts
- Copies of CD's with records of 1700-1892, reformat for current computer technology
- Update records from 1892 to present.
- Continue to protect hard copies and catalog
- Re establish the Historic Society/Commission- paperwork and filing is done just needs updating and there is a bank account in the society's name.
- Recognize private historic sites- plaques, possible tourism connection
- Refer to the Town of Pittston, the Historical society has started to inventory all stone walls and foundations.
- Make Oral Histories, in writing, on tape or video.
- Victoria Christopher will search for oral histories done by high school students 6 years ago.
- Protect Lavallo photos in vault
- Catalog old roads, lakes and cemeteries
- Stackhold book

Recreation Committee Update: Several e-mails floated around, but still no meeting has taken place. Patrice to give Aaron White a call, but ideas are still requested for others that may be interested in the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

Next meeting will take place on June 22nd at the Town Hall and will cover Public Facilities.

Post-meeting notes...

From Priscilla Jenkins – Waiting on list of farms, should have by next meeting.

Carl Swanson e-mailed Patrice and mentioned that several years ago Lou Carrier proposed using some place in the Winthrop Commerce Center as a site for permanent storage of historic documents/artifacts, but it is not know if this is still a possibility. Carl also mentioned that he has many items that he has been saving in hopes of the Town acquiring a place for it.