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CITY HALL, ROOM 204
4 SUMMER STREET
HAVERHILL, MA 01830
TELEPHONE: 978 374-2328

www.cityofhaverhill.com
citycncl@cityofhaverhill.com

CITY OF HAVERHILL
HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS 01830-5843

MINUTES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES & PUBLIC PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE
AND HAVERHILL HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

October 7, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: NRPP Members present were Councilor Sullivan, Chairperson & Councilors LePage and Bevilacqua. Also in attendance was Council President Barrett, and Councilors Jordan and Michitson. Members of the Haverhill Historic Commission in attendance were Peter Carbone, Chairperson, and participating remotely were Commissioners Michael Drossos, Tom Wylie, Ron Peacetree, Eric Sanders, and Dan Speers.

Others in attendance in person or remotely: Neil Cook, Peter Brown, David Dever, Ricky Early, Dee Oneil, Diane Itasaka, Ralph Basiliere, Carlene DesMarais, Debbie Dolfe, Sandy McCready, Mary Jane Cuneo, Matteo Molbec, William Taylor, Elaine Barker, Lee Fleming, Ben Roy, Jan Williams, John Cuneo, Pamela Chaisson, Eva Favreau, Michaela Gunning, Dale Leone, Tyler D'Ambrosio, Morgan Gunning, Karyna Ward, and Andrew Herlihy, Community Development & Planning office.

- 1) The following item was on the agenda: Hannah Duston Monument in Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Park.

The Chair introduced the Councilors and Commissioners participating in the joint meeting of the NRPP and Haverhill Historical Commission and thanked the citizens for participating in person or remotely. The Chair explained that the discussion would revolve around the future of the Hannah Duston statue currently located at G.A.R. Park. The Chair pointed out that this was the first of two meetings for this purpose, and that the focus of this first meeting was to hear from the citizens. The second meeting to be set at a future date would focus on discussion amongst the Councilors and Commissioners on the subject, with the end result being a recommendation from the NRPP Sub-Committee and from the HHC to the full Council and to the Mayor, the Mayor being the ultimate authority to make any changes to the monument's look or location.

The Chair introduced Kimberley Connors, an Archeologist from the Archeology Education Outreach Center, and Founder of the MA Cultural Council Creative Teaching Partner who presented a cursory review of the historical narrative that exists of life in colonial Haverhill back in the late 1600's, and how Hannah and the story came to be what it has become today. She explained Indian attacks were happening frequently in our area for at least three years prior to Hannah's capture. She pointed out that no narrative exists from Hannah directly, meaning no written account by Hannah. She said that Cotton Mather offered the first account of Hannah

Duston story, and published three versions of it between 1697-1702. Mather believed Native Americans were instruments of the devil and that Puritans were righteous taking away Native American land. It is documented that Hannah and others being held captive banded together to escape from captivity and they scalped 2 men, 2 women, and 5 children. Hannah received 25lbs for the scalps she brought back. She said there doesn't appear to be any documented evidence as to how Hannah's child died during the kidnapping. But we are told that her infant's head was smashed against a rock during the kidnapping by her captors. Border land raids and warring was happening between the French, English and Native Americans at that time, and that was the world we lived in back in the late 1600's. She said since the 19th century the Hannah Duston story has become what is known as a "captive narrative", meaning it is a fictionalized historical accounting of what actually happened.

Diane Dustin Isataka, President of Duston House and 8th generation descendant of Hannah, encouraged people to do their own research. She expressed the Duston family does not support the statue's removal. They support adding to the narrative to better explain the times. Support changing message on the base. They support adding a Native American memorial to the site.

Jan Williams, Director, Buttonwoods Museum, spoke that although Hannah is part of our history so are the Native Americans. Three years ago the Museum stop telling the one-sided story, and now they just tell the facts that are known about it. There are few known facts. She explained the Museum's mission is to represent all members of the community, and now includes Native American history. They revised the Hannah display at the Museum. They received a grant to explain Native American History. Education is a work in progress. Stive to tell the facts.

Dee Jacobs Oneil spoke in favor of keeping the monument. She presented a petition with 1644 signatures in support of keeping the monument in place, to change the offensive language referring to "savages" on the statue's base, and to add a "QR" code to the site to give a more complete and accurate historical accounting.

Bill Taylor stated this was a dark chapter in our history, not to be honored or celebrated. He objects to the plaque and use of the word "savages". He said the monument reinforces white supremacy and should not be displayed in a public space.

Peter Brown from one of oldest families in Haverhill, said he has relatives on both sides of the debate. Hannah is a part of our history, good or bad. Recounted the King Williams war going on at the time of kidnapping. Retold the story. Hailed as a hero. First woman statue in the new world. Symbol of empowerment, war hero, statue should remain. He supports leaving the monument where it is but adding another monument for Native Americans at the same site instead of removing Hannah.

Ben Roy said the monument is a symbol of white supremacy, and has no place in our diverse community. Either move it to a museum like Buttonwoods where it can be explained in historical context or if Buttonwoods not an option then melt it down and make a native American statue. He stated that if the Council doesn't support the statue's removal from public property then Council endorses white supremacy. Changing the plaque base doesn't mitigate the violence of the act itself. Removing statue not erasing history if moved to other property museum setting.

Mary Jane Cunco spoke and agreed the monument placed in museum would be a better place to explain it and put it into proper historical context. Perspectives have changed over the years. Move it to a historical setting. Don't alter words if put in a museum setting. They explain and teach. Misrepresents Haverhill today. Move it and present it as a historical artifact.

Ralph Basiliere spoke and said the Mayor asked him to speak about returning G.A.R. Park to a Veterans memorial park and suggested the Mayor would support Hannah be moved to the Duston Garrison House. Other sties mentioned were the Duston marker on Route 110, the First Landing Park Site on Water Street, or along the forthcoming extended Rail Trail site. He recommended using education stations like the ones at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park to tell the Native American side of the story.

Elaine Barker lifelong resident offered a wife and a mother's perspective in defense of Hannah's actions. She said we should use the past as a lesson, but do not get stuck in the past as it gets in the way of a better future for everyone.

Neil Cook, a Native American and descendant of Hannah, recalled picnicking in the park and how his mother explained the statue as a relative of theirs. He said he has heard both sides of the issue from his own family members. He supports leaving the statue in G.A.R. Park and add to it with Native American memorial and narrative.

Matteo Morla spoke as a life-long resident and mixed indigenous person who supported moving the statue to a more appropriate location such as a museum.

David Dever supported keeping the statue where it is, change the offensive language, or put the question on the ballot.

Carlene DesMarais expressed concern about Hannah meeting Lafayette's fate if moved to an obscure location like Lafayette was many years ago when we eliminated the Rotary in Lafayette Square..

Remote participation:

Eva Favreau recommended moving Hannah to either Buttonwoods or Duston Garrison House and that this wouldn't threaten her history. Statue represents act of violence against women and Native Americans. Represents white women privilege. Is an effigy to white privilege.

Michaela Gunning said the Hannah Duston story belongs in history books and not on the streets of Haverhill. Statue represents American Imperialism. She said she learned the white-washed biased version back in third grade.

Dale Leone said the word choice on the base is unacceptable. Native American are not and were never savages. Need to understand all sides of this statues story. Make future better by moving it to less prominent location, or put it in the museum setting to better explain it.

Tyler D'Ambrosio spoke as a teacher of this period of history who knows the subject well. He recommended compromise and teach more history on both sides. Reconcile descendants and Abenaki Indians. Consider importance of the statue as a constant reminder how far we have come. Preserves memory of a woman who displayed courage under horrible circumstances.

Morgan Gunning spoke not in support of the statue remaining anywhere. Said the third grade curriculum doesn't give full story. Indigenous history erased a long time ago. Calling Native Americans "savages" is a racial slur dehumanizing them. Society still perpetuates reflect American sense of entitlement. City doesn't care about indigenous people. Assimilate and eradicate indigenous people. Ignorance and total lack of empathy.

Karina Ward said she had never seen statue up close and never learned any history from it. Racist statue. Makes no sense to have racist symbol in middle of town.

Commissioners

Dan Speers-part Cherokee part Welsh. Statue is racist to people who know the history. Natives are not savages. We are more alike than we are different. Statues should represent who we are today. Placed in another location where it can be part of history.

Ron Peacetree French Irish Iroquois Indian old family stories IIIIC not HPC responsible to ensure history not propaganda is presented not celebrated. Lock down facts and separate fact from fiction. Mather hated Native Americans not a reliable source for factual historical narrative. Teach historical truth to our students today.

Concluded by wanted to hear from the citizens and the second meeting Councilors and Commissioners will speak. Important time in our city's history. Haverhill tries to be united. We do not control this process. Will make a recommendation to the full City Council and to the Mayor. Make the best decision we can make. Community be part of the solution.

Councilor Bevilacqua made a motion to adjourn seconded by Councilor LePage, and passed 3-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas J. Sullivan, Chairperson

April 23, 2021

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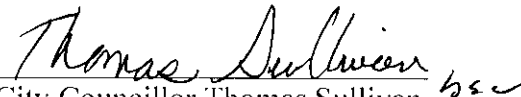
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April 23, 2021

TO: President and Members of the City Council:

City Councillor Thomas Sullivan submits the attached Minutes and recommendations of the Natural Resources and Public Property Committee meeting that was held on November 5, 2020 for acceptance and discussion of the Hannah Duston Monument in Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Park. A motion was made to recommend to full city council that the statue stay where it is in G.A.R. Park, and the city should provide the Abenaki an opportunity to erect their own Memorial, with the city to provide land and site work in G.A.R. Park.


City Councillor Thomas Sullivan *bsc*

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MINUTES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES & PUBLIC PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE
AND HAVERHILL HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

November 5, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: NRPP Members present were Councilor Sullivan, Chairperson & Councilors LePage and Bevilacqua. Also in attendance was Council President Barrett. Members of the Haverhill Historic Commission in attendance were Peter Carbone, Chairperson, and participating remotely were Commissioners Tom Wylie, Ron Peacetree, and Dan Speers.

Others in attendance in person or remotely: Diane Itasaka, David Dustin, Elaine Barker, Jan Williams, Ben Roy, Carol Nedeau, Dale Leone, David Jellison, Dermot Luddy, John Cuneo, John Lee Grant, Judy Matthews, Mary Jane Cuneo, Michaela Gunning, Suzie O'Bomsawin, Alexandra Itasaka, and Andrew Herlihy, Community Development & Planning office.

- 1) The following item was on the agenda: Second Meeting to discuss the Hannah Duston Monument in Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Park.

The Chair introduced the Councilors and Commissioners participating in the second joint meeting of the NRPP and Haverhill Historical Commission and thanked the citizens for participating in person or remotely. The Chair explained that the discussion tonight would turn to the Councilors and Commissioners thoughts and recommendations about the future of the Hannah Duston statue currently located at G.A.R. Park. The Chair pointed out that this was the second of two meetings for this purpose, and that the focus of this first meeting was to hear from the citizens. Tonight's meeting was to be a discussion amongst the Councilors and Commissioners, with the end result being one or more recommendation from the NRPP Sub-Committee to the full Council and to the Mayor, the Mayor being the ultimate authority to spend any city funds to make any changes to the monument's look or its location.

Diane Itasaka President of Dustin Duston Garrison House, spoke and said moving Hannah to the Duston Garrison House is not an option, citing safety concerns and other concerns she did not wish to state publicly. She suggested leaving statue in G.A.R. Park and expand to include Abenaki (Native American) narrative and make it an educational experience.

David A. Dustin, Secretary Dustin Duston Family Association formed in 1905 which established Duston Garrison House in 1945 to acquire, preserve, and restore the Garrison House in Haverhill. He suggested keeping it in G.A.R. park as an emblem of the complex history of a frontier community during the colonial period.

Elaine Barker was allowed to reiterate her remarks made at the first meeting.

Suzie O'Bomsawin, an ancestor of the Abenaki Nation spoke about how hard it is to listen to the narrative of the past, and said we can do better. She recommended removal of the statue.

Ben Roy spoke again and said the statue represents a symbol of hate and white supremacy, historical context at time it was erected. Only way to address the harm done is by actually doing something about the statue not just put signs around it explaining it is a symbol of hate and white supremacy/

Dale Leone said he did not appreciate the biased Dustin family narrative perspective. Stop pushing hero narrative. Choose progressivism.

Michaela Gunning spoke and felt the proponents of keeping Hannah were utterly dismissive of the opposing point of view. She noted that how we move forward as a community and how we address this issue here and in the classroom in the future is important and that it must be sensitive to the Native Americans living today.

Marie Soraghan spoke and said keep it at its' current location, and that removal alone will result in no direct benefit to indigenous people. She said our local controversy is part of the national effort to change our nation's history. This is part of Haverhill's history not necessarily that we honor her.

Commissioner Carbone read a lengthy statement reviewing many of the comments and suggestions made by members of the Council, Commission and citizens. He urged not to whitewash our future. Hannah's fate rests with the politicians. And we should act in unison. In unity there is strength.

Commissioner Peacetree recommended having Kimberley Connors do a more comprehensive research paper on the subject once she can get back into research centers closed currently due to COVID. Then once we have the report we will have information we need to make a decision based on facts not falsehoods.

Commissioner Speers recommended moving the statue to a more appropriate place like the Garrison House and to make the space where Hannah is now a square of hope that reflects the destiny of Haverhill that everyone can share in and relate to representing the future of Haverhill no matter what race or nationality.

Commissioner Wylie recommended we relocate the statue to Hannah Dustin Park or Buttonwoods Museum with a pro-Native American narrative added to put the statue in proper historical context.

Councilor Bevilacqua thanked all the speakers for coming during these difficult times. He said he has been speaking with citizens of all ages and backgrounds, seniors, school age children about this issue. And he appreciated their input. He said it is a difficult story, but that we should

not move the statue. He stated he has no objection to setting aside land at G.A.R. park allowing Abenaki or Native American groups to erect a memorial telling the Native American side of the story.

Councilor LePage thanked everyone for participating. He explained this has been a learning experience. He said he could both sympathize and emphasize with the Native Americans and the Dustin family over the loss of loved ones. He expressed hope for some form of compromise.

President Barrett said she supports the Abenaki having their own monument. She supports changing narrative on bottom of Duston statue. She noted the vast majority of calls or emails received by her were in support of keeping the statue in G.A.R. Park.

Chairperson Sullivan then spoke and noted this is a complicated issue and speaks to the history of violence in the United States which started in our area because we were the first point of landing. He said he does not support the statue's removal. Need to find consensus where does Hannah belong in the history of Haverhill and how do we explain her today in 2020 with a whole new perspective as opposed to propaganda of the late 1800's. He said the hope tonight is to propose ideas to move forward to full City Council and Mayor. He noted it is going to cost money to do any of this. He would support leaving statue where is with improvements made to the base of the statue along with a Native American Memorial to better explain the story. Or if relocated then put in appropriate setting where it can become a teachable lesson to prevent future acts of violence.

Councilor Bevilacqua made a motion to recommend to full city council that the statue stay where it is in G.A.R. Park, and the city should provide the Abenaki an opportunity to erect their own Memorial, with the city to provide land and site work in G.A. R. Park. If not, then recommend Buttonwoods as the next best location. President Barrett and Jan Williams from Buttonwoods explained that the Museum is not an option as the Board of Directors had previously voted unanimously not to allow the relocation to Buttonwoods property.

Commissioner Wylie suggested Hannah Dustin Park across from HHS or the stone marker on Rte. 110 as alternative sights should Hannah be relocated.

Chair noted that from a procedural standpoint the role of NRPP Sub-Committee was to come up with a recommendation. He clarified that it doesn't meant our recommendation will be adopted by full Council or the Mayor as they may have their own ideas. Chair explained that in order to move forward a recommendation voted on by the three subcommittee members needed to be made such as Councilor Bevilacqua's previous motion.

The motion by Councilor Bevilacqua was seconded by Councilor LePage, and the roll call vote was taken and the item passed 2-1, Councilor LePage voting against the motion.

Commissioner Carbone asked that the record show no formal vote was taken by HHC during this meeting and they would make their own formal recommendation at a future meeting of the HHC.

Councilor Bevilacqua made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor LePage and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas J. Sullivan, Chairperson

April 23, 2021