

ACTON 250TH COMMITTEE

History Subcommittee

March 30, 2023

Meeting minutes

Attending: Bob Ferrara, Anne Forbes, Pamela Lynn, Alissa Nicol (via ZOOM), Sue Peterman,
ABSENT: Mary Price Maddox

The meeting was called to order by chair Pamela Lynn at 4:25 in the Acton Memorial Library conference room.

Pam reiterated the importance of keeping a quorum of four in mind for any committee meetings. She explained that virtual participation is only allowable for committee members, and applies only in instances of illness, etc., or if the member is 20+ miles from Acton at the time of the meeting. For this meeting, Alissa met the first of those conditions.

It was agreed that we should have all committee phone numbers on hand. For those participating at this meeting, they are:

- Bob Ferrara: 617-513-9355
- Anne Forbes: 978-263-2227
- Pamela Lynn: 508-864-7648
- Alissa Nicol: 978-493-2735
- Sue Peterman: 978-844-4362

Minutes of the March 23 meeting were then reviewed, and on a motion by Bob (seconded by Pam), approved unanimously.

A brief report on the 3/27 meeting of the full Acton 250th Committee meeting was then given. The meeting touched on matters of merchandising, the planned logo contest, budget/fundraising, speakers, and difficulties with accessing the committee email “shell” and the committee’s online documents. Members of this committee experiencing those problems will pursue them with the Acton IT department.

History Subcommittee goals and responsibilities

It was agreed that the work of the history subcommittee should involve tasks and topics of a **historic nature** that relate to April 19, 1775. As a result, the members agreed to focus on the following:

1. Gather and investigate **historical questions** regarding April 19, particularly pertaining to Acton
2. Develop a **historical timeline** relevant to the events of April 19, 1775
3. Develop a **present-day timeline** of **planned events** related to Patriots’ Day, beginning with 2023 events and activities by stakeholders and other local and regional groups
4. Oversee the Acton 250th Committee’s **publicity** for #3
5. Oversee the Acton 250th Committee’s **speakers program**
6. Develop a list of recommended **publications** relevant to the history of April 19

In discussion, Alissa reported that #4 (current publicity) is already underway. Bob reported the same for the current speakers subcommittee. Anne has started a list of publicity outlets, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Progress toward three of the goals (#s 1, 3, and 4) was then further discussed:

2023 publicity and timeline. Pam is gathering copies of the ongoing publicity from various local groups for this year's scheduled Patriots' Day weekend events, and distributed a draft of Iron Work Farm and Acton Minutemen's events so far. An immediate question was how to get the information into people's hands. The 250th committee already has plans to post events on the town website. Investigating what the local schools might be able to do was suggested—via school-wide emails, notices to the students, etc. Sue suggested issuing a press release on all the activities we know of, and volunteered to work on it after April 7. We should also check the publicity of surrounding towns. In that regard, it was suggested that we should send notices to nearby communities, for instance Concord and the Concord Visitors' Center. Beth Williams coordinates notices for the town, at bwilliams@concordma.gov. The town and visitors' center have a comprehensive website, at <http://visitconcord.org>.

Historical questions. Pam suggested gathering information on some of the deepest questions behind the colonials' (and Acton's) motivations for opposing the British Crown, and some of the lasting results. See attached example of three possible questions: 1) Why is the Concord Bridge such an important part of Acton history? 2) Why is April 19 a state holiday? 3) Why is Town Meeting such an important part of our civic life?

In discussion about some tentative answers to #3, it was suggested that we might examine the resulting effects on local government, highlighting the initial relationship of the church and town government, and our use of Town Meeting into the present day. It was noted that this information might relate to the current school curriculum, blend with using a trivia approach as a tool in 250th activities, etc.

Timeline of the American Revolution. The timeline introduced at the last meeting was reviewed and discussed in the light of the committee's goals and potential historical questions. It was agreed that we would begin to condense the listed events to the most important milestones and the most impactful of the British actions. Many questions were raised, including how and when Acton became involved in the Committees of Correspondence. It was agreed that we might recommend speakers who are most expert on these topics. Most recommended were Bob Allison, who we might recommend for later this year; Bob Gross; and Mary Fuhrer. Recommendations for a second group were: Katherine Grandjean, Gordon Wood, and possibly Steve Crosby.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m. NEXT MEETING: April 6, 3:15

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Forbes