



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES

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Hannah Duston Advisory Committee
November 20, 2020, 11:00am
Virtual Subcommittee
Zoom online meeting

Committee Attendees: Alan Hardy; Andrew Cushing (chair); Barbara Cutter; Christine DeLucia; Craig Richardson; David A. Dustin; Denise K. Pouliot; Elaine Clow; Erica Gish (clerk); Paul W. Pouliot; Jack Shields

Members of the Public: none

I. Call to Order

- a. Welcome: Andrew Cushing called the meeting to order 11:03 AM and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Andrew read the Right to Know information and public notice information required for conducting virtual meetings.
 - i. Roll Call for committee members commenced 11:06 AM.
- b. The Committee reviewed October's meeting minutes. Denise Pouliot made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Elaine Clow seconded the motion, the minutes were unanimously accepted. Jack Shields abstained from the vote.

II. Updates

- a. Jack Shields updated the Committee on the latest news on the expansion of the rail trail. The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail – Merrimack County has raised money to purchase the expansion of the trail and is in negotiation with the Town of Boscawen for the right of way and the State of New Hampshire for accepting the land as a donation. The goal is to complete negotiations over the next year to year and a half.
 - i. The land purchase would include the land between the two bridges on the island.
 - ii. The right of way would extend forty-one feet from the center of the trail. The land beyond the forty-one feet would remain Boscawen's property.
 - iii. The expansion would increase access to the island.

III. Proposal Ideas

- a. Andrew shared with the Hannah Duston Advisory Committee a list of ideas to propose to the State of New Hampshire based off of the conversation from the last meeting. The removal of the statue and leaving the site "as-is" has been eliminated as potential options from the proposal.
- b. State Highway Historical Marker
 - i. There is a marker dedicated to Hannah Duston that has been placed on a list for review for a few different groups. Andrew suggested that the Committee be involved in the discussions about changing the narrative of the marker to be more inclusive.
- c. Interpretive Panels
 - i. It was suggested to add to the list about contextualizing the era the statue to was erected. Topics could include western expansion and interactions with Native American populations. In addition to language about the 19th century, it was suggested to add why the decision was made to keep the statue rather than removing it.

- ii. Additional ideas for the interpretive panels included the geological history of the area, the ambiguity of what really happened and where, native and invasive flora and fauna of the area, and the ability for visitors to have easy access to more information through audio tours, QR codes, or walking guides. Denise added that signage should be in English as well as Abenaki wherever language permits.
 - iii. It was noted that signage should be informative but not overload the visitor with information as it could detract from the experience.
 - d. The Hannah Duston Statue & Security
 - i. As deterrents from future vandalism, fencing, installing lighting and cameras was suggested. The historic cast iron fencing at the base of the statue could also provide additional surfaces for interpretive panels to be adhered to.
 - e. Public Art
 - i. In an effort to find a balance of perspectives and narratives at the sight, a permanent memorial to the ten Abenaki people who died. Other suggestions were to have a mix of interactive art, permanent pieces, and rotating art, possibly coordinated through a “friends” group. It was noted that the Hannah Duston statue’s height was so that passengers on a passing train could see it.
 - f. Northern Rail Trail & Expansion
 - i. There will be future discussion with the Town of Boscawen in regard to the trail expansion, signage, and potential services.
 - g. Parking
 - i. There is overcrowding on hot, summer days at the nearby Park and Ride lot.
 - h. Trails
 - i. The Committee discussed potential safety issues with increased traffic flow and a potential boat launch. It was mentioned that there may be some new signage on the island highlighting water dangers, as well as updating any outdated signage.
 - ii. The Town of Boscawen is seeking a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency in 2021 to clean up the riverbank nearby.
 - i. New Name for the Island
 - i. A review of the island’s name was also suggested. The site’s name of “Hannah Duston Island” may not be reflective of the potential changes to the site. “Unity Park” was suggested for the new name of the site. Whether or not the island’s name is officially changed, there was discussion about how to name the site as “Hannah Duston Historic Site” may no longer accurately describe the site.

IV. Next Meeting

- a. Andrew suggested holding the next meeting early January to accommodate the holiday season. Committee members are to continue submitting examples of how other organizations are contextualizing historic sites and memorials to Andrew. Members are to also keep a look out for potential grants for the project.

V. Public Comments – none.

VI. Adjournment

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 12:08 PM.