



## **PERU HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

May 1, 2021

Meeting held on Zoom

**Present:** R. Burke, S. Adams, S. Masino and J. Kenney.

**Absent:** E. Munch

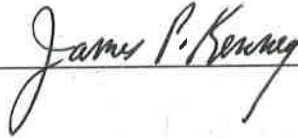
1. The meeting was called to order at 11:03am. Roll call was taken.
2. Acknowledgement of meeting recording status – This meeting was not recorded
3. Finalization of minutes from February 20, 2021 meeting: Attending members agreed that the reviewed draft could be finalized. J. Kenney will sign-off on behalf of commission members and submit the minutes to the Town Clerk as final.
4. Reminder: Annual Notice of Conflict-of-Interest Law Education Requirements: Members were reminded that there is an obligation to review the materials provided and provide documentation to the Town Clerk.
5. Update regarding the Commemorative Medallion: To date over half of the medallions, of the 250 ordered, have been sold. An article had been included in the most recent edition of Live Wire informing the town that medallions could be purchased.
6. Update on Honor Roll criteria – R. Burke has been researching the criteria used for placing names on Honor Rolls. Interestingly, neither the American Legion nor the VFW have criteria on their websites. Many towns have formed committees to manage their Honor Rolls. Additional research will be conducted to determine specific criteria which may apply to Peru. Generally, the criteria seem to be 1) the individual was a town resident at the time military service began, and 2) the individual received an honorable discharge from service. More to follow on this topic.
7. New Topic: History of the Boston Post Cane – E. Munch had made J. Kenney aware of a long-standing New England practice referred to as the Boston Post Cane award. By way of background, in 1909, Edwin A. Grozier, the Boston Post newspaper publisher in an effort to boost readership, contracted J.F. Fradley and Co., a New York firm, to manufacture 700 ebony canes that were to be given out to the oldest male citizens of towns throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island. No cities were included. In 1930 the rules were changed to include women. The canes were passed down to the next oldest citizen upon the death of the original holder, but over the years many of the canes were lost or kept by heirs. The ebony was shipped in 7-foot lengths from The Congo in Africa. They were cut to cane lengths, seasoned for 6 months, turned on lathes to the right thickness, coated and polished. They had a 14-carat gold head two inches long, decorated by hand, and a ferruled tip. The head was engraved with the inscription, "Presented by the Boston Post to the oldest citizen of (name of town) To Be Transmitted". The Board of Selectmen were to be the trustees of the cane and keep it always in the hands of the oldest citizen.

Members voted unanimously to pursue reinstating the Boston Post Cane award. J. Kenney was tasked with following-up with the Town Clerk to determine who the oldest resident is in advance of making a proposal to the Selectboard. Post-Meeting Note: While following-up on this discussion, J. Kenney learned that Selectman V. Leach has been interacting with State Representative Paul Mark regarding the Boston Post Cane award. Town Clerk K. Leach has indicated that a replacement cane is available and the recent census data will be used to determine the rightful recipient. Since the Selectboard are the trustees of the cane, there's no need for the Historical Commission to pursue any additional discussions.

8. Contributing to the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration: J. Kenney reminded members that it would be appreciated if additional though could be given to them contributing to the 1995 – 2021 update, selecting and writing biographies of Peru history and notable residents as well as contributions to Peru Live Wire.
9. 11:45 – Invitation for public participation – No members of the public connected via Zoom.
10. Planning for next Historical Commission Meeting – The next meeting will be planned to occur in approximately 4 weeks
11. Any Other Business – Nothing offered
12. Adjourn Meeting at 11:45

**Respectfully approved and submitted:**

James Kenney, Chairman



Date: 7/24/21

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JUL 30 2021  
Kim A Leach  
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