

Tim Carroll

From: Jennifer Christy [townclerk@chilmarkma.gov]
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2011 10:35 AM
To: 'Tim Carroll'
Cc: 'Assistant Exec Secretary'
Subject: Perambulation of the town's bounds

Hi Tim,

Other town clerks are chatting about this...

MGL 42, Sec. 2

The boundary markers of every town shall be located, the marks thereon renewed, and the year located marked upon the face thereof which bears the letter of the town locating its boundary, once every five years, by at least two of the selectmen of the town or by two substitutes designated by them in writing. The marking shall be made with a paint or other suitable marking material.

The proceedings shall be recorded with the town clerk and the board of selectmen of the town in writing signed under penalty of perjury setting forth which boundary marks were located, and those which were not located. A copy of such records shall also be sent, by registered letter, to the town clerk and the board of selectmen of any contiguous town.

And, this is interesting:

Years ago, one of the more practical festivals of the Christian Year was Rogation. A moveable holiday that occurred the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday, Rogation was when each town organized a procession to trace the parish or borough boundaries. Civic and religious leaders led a perambulation which stopped at each boundary marker where a prayer was given (in part to prevent evil spirits from spreading diseases and spoiling the harvest) before returning to the church for cakebread and ale. Another feature was the practice of "beating the bounds" which was done both figuratively by pacing them off and literally with peeled willow wands to both the boundary markers themselves and to little boys brought along for the purpose in order to impress upon their memories the exact location of the true parish boundaries so that when they grew up they could attest to the boundaries even if the markers went astray, and carry on the tradition. They were also often given a small coin for their troubles.

Has perambulation of the bounds been done in the last five years? I don't seem to have a record of it being done.

Jennifer L. Christy
Town Clerk
Chilmark Town Hall
401 Middle Road, Beetlebung Corner
Post Office Box 119
Chilmark, MA 02535-0119
P: (508) 645-2100 ext. 2107
F: (508) 645-2110
E: townclerk@chilmarkma.gov
Notary Public & Justice of the Peace

The Secretary of State's office has determined that most e-mails to and from municipal offices and officials are public records. Consequently, confidentiality should not be expected.

6/2/2011