

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 14, 2016 4:00 PM Trustee's Room, Library

Members Present:

Louise Zerba, Chair
Rose Carey, Vice-Chair
Marilyn Gemmell
Jonathan Foskett, Alternate

Staff Present:

Tara Kessler, Planner

Members Not Present:

Robert O'Connor, Councilor
Katherine Snow
Susan D'Egidio
Kevin Dremel

1) Call to Order/Roll Call -

Chair Zerba called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Roll call was conducted. Chair Zerba welcomed Jonathan Foskett as a new member to the Commission, and asked him to sit in for Kathy Snow. The following guests were introduced: Attorney Thomas Hanna, Nadine Miller and Amy Dixon, of NHDHR, and Anita Carroll-Weldon.

2) Approval of Minutes – July 13, 2016

Ms. Carey made a motion to adopt the minutes of July 13, 2016 as submitted. Ms. Gemmell seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Referring to the previous meeting Chair Zerba asked Ms. Carey about the \$85.00 Chapel rental fee for the Sweet Tea Event. Ms. Carey reported the \$85.00 fee had been waived.

3) Proposed Main Street Historic District Ordinance

Chair Zerba introduced Anita Carroll-Weldon who served as Chair for the Historic District Commission Ordinance Review Sub-committee. Chair Zerba reported the draft Ordinance did go before the Joint Committee and the thinking is the Ordinance may not pass as it moves forward. Chair Zerba noted discussions on what to do at this point; move forward or withdraw the Ordinance.

Ms. Carroll-Weldon said we are hoping to withdraw the Ordinance and she is looking for a vote from the Heritage Commission to the Historic District Commission in this regards. Ms. Carroll-Weldon provided a history of the Sub-committee and its work noting the Sub-committee put forward a very minimal draft to have some protection of the historic buildings; she also shared the opposition to the Ordinance from local residents. Continuing, Ms. Carroll-Weldon reported two amendments were proposed at the Joint Meeting; which the Sub-committee feels has reduced the Ordinance to the point where it offers no protection to the historic buildings.

Ms. Carroll-Weldon noted the Sub-committee would like to put forward (in place of the Ordinance) some of the things the property owners were concerned about for that area. She presented the following suggestions:

1. Safety issues on that area of Main Street- continue the median strip from the roundabout to Route 101 and plant it with similar kinds of large trees, add more crosswalks, and lastly highlight the historic nature of the area with a sign at the beginning of Main Street welcoming people to Historic Keene.
2. The officers of the Foundation for the Preservation of Historic Keene have met and said they would be willing to raise funds for property owners in that area who are interested in restoring or maintaining their houses in a historically accurate manner. These funds would provide for technical advice from either historic architects or historic restoration specialists.
3. The Foundation also asked if the Heritage Commission would consider working on the following two suggestions: 1) have Elizabeth Hengren write a more detailed historic tour of lower Main Street/identify other historic areas of Keene, and 2) host public workshops on how to research the history of your home, Historic Districts that are less restrictive or presentations on how to restore historic features such as windows.

Chair Zerba clarified the first vote would be to withdraw; Ms. Carroll-Weldon agreed noting the other suggestions are not within the purview of any of the Historic Commissions' but we would like to see these presented to City Council.

Chair Zerba asked Ms. Kessler to explain the process. Ms. Kessler noted the vote this evening would be recommending that the Historic District Commission consider recommending to City Council that they withdraw the proposed Ordinance for Main Street. As there were members of the public present, Ms. Kessler suggested at the advice of the City Attorney no public comments be entertained due to the process being in place. Ms. Kessler then went on to explain what the process would be whichever way City Council decides to go. Discussion continued regarding the resubmittal of the Ordinance; Ms. Kessler will clarify the one-year timeline (is withdrawal the same as a no vote) with the City Attorney and report back. Ms. Kessler also clarified for Ms. Gemmell if the Ordinance fails the proposed District boundaries are not designated.

Ms. Carey made a motion for the Heritage Commission recommends to the Historic District Commission that the proposed Ordinance for the Main Street Historic District be withdrawn. Mr. Foskett seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Ms. Carey asked about the other activities suggested by Ms. Carroll-Weldon. Ms. Miller indicated those activities could be funded under the CLG program. Ms. Miller also suggested

the neighborhood could be listed under the National Register; she pointed out this is an honorary title only with no regulations. Chair Zerba thanked Ms. Carroll-Weldon for coming.

4) Presentation on the Section 106 Review Process & Certified Local Government Program – Nadine Miller and Amy Dixon, NH Division of Historical Resources

A two-part PowerPoint presentation was presented to the Commission and guests. Ms. Dixon gave the first half on the Certified Local Government Program and shared how the town of Exeter utilized the program. Ms. Miller then discussed the second half which was on the Section 106 Review Process. At Chair Zerba's request Ms. Miller agreed to forward the slide presentation to Ms. Kessler for distribution to Commission members as reference material. After some discussion Ms. Miller advised when NHDHR requests comments on projects from the Commission it is okay to say they have no comments or choose not to participate. Ms. Miller indicated in these instances an email to her noting these choices will suffice. At this point Ms. Miller distributed a handout, A Citizens Guide to Section 106 Review published by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Ms. Miller outlined the applicant's request for project reviews, the consultation, consult with mitigation, and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) noting the applicant has three years to complete the mitigation tasks. Ms. Miller reported on the symposium being held October 28, 2016 to celebrate 50 years of the National Preservation Act, in Concord. She recommended those interested in attending should sign up as the 100 spots are going quickly. Ms. Miller will send the information over to Ms. Kessler.

Chair Zerba asked Ms. Miller to walk the Commission through the process as it relates to the Hillside Village. Chair Zerba noted that Jim Phippard came before the Commission last fall to explain the process. Ms. Miller said it was nice the Commission had a heads-up early, even before the NHDHR did. Ms. Miller continued an initial request for project review came to our office; we then asked for an archeological survey and an inventory form due to the photographs we saw (barn and farmhouse). She reported they couldn't determine if it was eligible for the National Register from the photographs. They (the applicant) hired an archeological company to do the archeological survey and they hired architectural historians to do the inventory form. From the archeological survey they determined there is a site related to the agricultural history of the area; the above ground inventory by the architectural historian determined the area was not eligible for the National Register; NHDHR felt differently. A meeting was held and we're at the point now where we need to do the MOA and decide what the best mitigation is. Ms. Miller indicated it would be great if this information was included in their project review form. Ms. Miller then discussed cell tower projects noting the new and colocation standards (Programmatic Agreement signed by all states) are available online.

Noting the hour Chair Zerba advised she has another meeting to attend and her departure will mean there is no quorum present. Ms. Kessler recommended transitioning to agenda item #5 before Chair Zerba has to leave.

5) Section 106 Review – 99 Wyman Road

Chair Zerba asked Attorney Hanna if he had something to present with regards to the mitigation. Attorney Hanna advised he was here to listen, noting he doesn't fully understand the proposal (exhibit) that was made and would like to know what that means. Ms. Miller noted a farm exhibit is what's being referred to; some can cost thousands of dollars and some can be as small as an exhibit on the wall in a hotel. Ms. Miller noted the exhibit suggestion was hers. Chair Zerba clarified both parties were referring to the farm exhibit discussed at the previous meeting.

Attorney Hanna indicated the proposal was to prepare a historical summary of the property using the information (inventory) we already have; and that this should be displayed at the community building which is part of the Hillside Village. He also indicated they would be using components of the historical structures as part of the exhibit and the corncrib could become a wayside or stopping off point in the trails to be installed on the property in the preserved area. In response to Ms. Miller Attorney Hanna said the trails would be open and in a preserved area. Attorney Hanna noted the difficulty in getting an organization such as the Monadnock Conservancy to be the donee organization of a preserved land in the middle of a development; he suggested it would be more reasonable for the City's Conservation Commission to be the donee grantee for a conservation easement on which would be these trails. Attorney Hanna noted no development is planned for this area.

Ms. Miller said we're at the consultation part, no one has agreed on one thing or another. She continued what we've done in the past is utilize interpretive signs on the trails instead of an exhibit. Ms. Miller noted she could supply the language for her suggestions. Discussion continued with Chair Zerba noting the applicant still needs a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers; she also suggested the Commission could hold a special meeting next month to hear from the applicant. Attorney Hanna asked how soon after this meeting could Ms. Miller have the MOA ready. Ms. Miller said they could be working on the MOA and have it ready to go. Attorney Hanna asked if the kinds of activities he suggested would be supported by the Commission. Chair Zerba, Ms. Carey and Mr. Foskett agreed they liked the walking trails ideas. Chair Zerba suggested Attorney Hanna put something together and forward it to Ms. Kessler.

Agenda items 6 through 10 were not discussed as Chair Zerba adjourned the meeting.

6) Heritage Commission Action Plan

7) Subcommittee Reports-

- a. Report of the Demolition Review Committee –**
- b. Report of the Community Outreach Commission –**
- c. Report of the Research Commission –**

8) Staff Updates-

9) New or Other Business

10) Next Meeting-

11) Adjournment – There being no further Commission business Chair Zerba adjourned the meeting at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
September 15, 2016