

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

4:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair
Hope Benik, Vice Chair
Anthony Ferrantello
Russ Fleming

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner

Members Not Present:

Councilor Catherine Workman
Peter Poanessa
David Bergeron, Alternate

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM and roll call ensued.

2) Minutes of February 21, 2024

Anthony Ferrantello motioned to adopt the February 21, 2024 minutes which was duly seconded by Russ Flemming and the motion passed unanimously.

3) Mayor Kahn – Discussion on Reducing Required Membership

Mayor Kahn was present to discuss reducing required membership in the HDC. To remedy the vacancies, he suggested reducing the size from seven to five which would reduce the quorum to three members. Mr. Flemming stated he thought it was a good idea.

Mayor Kahn stated that once Louise Zerba from the HC is confirmed as a full member, she would be joining the HDC.

Mr. Fleming moved to recommend that the City Council reduce the number of voting members from seven to five which was seconded by Mr. Ferrantello. The motion passed unanimously.

4) **CLG 2024 Project Kick-Off**

May Williams, a presentation consultant from Center Harbor, NH was present at the meeting. She would be working with the City to survey the 16 properties that were not surveyed in the original Historic District. Ms. Williams would use a similar format for each property, which she sent to Mr. Clements for review. She would look at the buildings from the public right of way and take photographs of the building to get what the materials are as well as the general form of the building. This would help develop a baseline for the HDC to make informed decisions going forward.

Mr. Clements stated he was hoping to gain knowledge of the architectural form and the original building materials that were used as that information is often blank on the inventory forms. He thought the HC was more equipped to research the history behind the building. Ms. Williams stated she would use the same terminology as the National Park Service or the New Hampshire Division Historical Resources which would be easily adaptable if the HDC decided they would like to turn a building in to a State or National Register nomination.

Ms. Williams spoke upon character defining integrity and what she would put in her recommendations to the committee. Mr. Clements stated he hoped Ms. Williams would provide a preliminary analysis and how each building fits into the district as a whole and leave it open ended for the HDC to decide their ranking. Ms. Williams stated that she was used to using either contributing or noncontributing as the two rankings and was unfamiliar with the nuances of the four different categories that the HDC uses but was confident she could provide them with feedback.

Mr. Ferrantello asked if Ms. Williams could recommend replacement of, or a plaque in honor of, any character defining feature that once existed on the building but had since been removed. She stated she could put that wording in her recommendation if it would be helpful to the committee.

Mr. Clements stated that some of the 16 buildings had not met the period of significance but that they would be ready with the reports for when the buildings enter that period of 50 years or older.

Keith Thibault, Chief Development Officer from Southwestern Community Services was present at the meeting to discuss 51 Railroad Street, a senior housing development that was built new in the Historic District. He commended the City's respect for and desire to make sure that those properties are redeveloped to high standards. He was very proud of the work that was done. Mr. Thibault was looking forward to seeing the list of the 16 buildings that were to be surveyed.

5) **69 Washington Street, Keene UU Church – Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places**

Mr. Clements informed the HDC that 69 Washington Street had been nominated for a place on the National Registry of Historic Places. The HC would write a letter of support for the nomination.

6) **Staff Updates**

A) **Master Plan Update**

Mr. Clements reported that the City was undergoing a comprehensive update to the City's Master Plan. A survey went out and they had done a two-day scenario planning exercise with about 60 people in attendance on each of the two days. Future IQ was the firm who was doing the strategic planning for the future. Mr. Clements discussed different scenario examples that had been discussed at the think tank meetings. He invited everyone to go to keenemasterplan.com to view all of the information about the project and to share it with members of the community as well.

7) **New Business**

There was no discussion.

8) **Upcoming Dates of Interest**

A) **Next HDC Meeting: July 17, 2024 – 4:30 PM, TBD**

Mr. Clements stated that Hannah Grimes on Roxbury Street had new mechanicals put on their roof. They did a good job of lining up a lot of the mini split condensers with an existing chimney. They would need a waiver if they decide not to install screening on the mechanicals.

44 Court Street hired a mason to tuck-point the entire building. They did a test patch to show Mr. Clements and would use a gentle detergent to clean the brick as well.

B) **HDC Site Visit: July 17, 2024 – 3:30 PM (To be confirmed)**

9) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Evan J. Clements, AICP
Planner