

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 13, 2024**

**4:30 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Cauley Powell, Chair  
Molly Ellis, Vice Chair  
Julie Emineth (left at 5:30 PM)  
Louise Zerba  
Marilyn Huston

**Staff Present:**

Evan Clements, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Rose Carey

**1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM. Roll call was conducted.

**2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2024**

Ms. Zerba stated that she has a correction to line 335: “number of house” should be “number of hours.” She continued that line 379 says, “reminding to the City Council” and the word “to” should be deleted.

Ms. Huston proposed several edits, stating that they were suggestions from Microsoft Office. The edits that the other Heritage Commission members agreed with are:

Line 68: the correct spelling is “plantain” (not “plaintain”).

Line 205: add the word “the,” so it reads, “about the recommendations she has.”

Line 232: change the word “has” to “had.” (“had any idea.”)

Line 308: remove the word “so.”

Lines 394-395: change the word “for” to “to.” (“pays so much money to consultants.”)

Line 408: add the word “had.” (“Someone who had just moved to Keene.”)

Line 421: add a comma after “there.”

Ms. Zerba made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 11, 2024, as amended. Ms. Emineth seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) **Downtown Infrastructure Project Aesthetic Features Presentation**  
A) **Discussion with Public Works and Consultants on Aesthetic Features to Represent the Heritage of the Community**

Chair Powell welcomed Stantec consultants, here to give a presentation.

Ed Roberge, Civil Engineer, and Bob Corning, Landscape Architect and Chief of the design team, introduced themselves. Mr. Roberge stated that many public meetings led up to this design. He continued that the project area is from the north at Central Square down to Water St., short of the Marlboro St./Winchester St. roundabout. It extends within the public right-of-way along Main St., encompassing Railroad Square, portions of Railroad St., and areas along Gilbo Ave., approximately up to St. James Place.

Mr. Roberge and Mr. Corning gave a slide show presentation about the design features, including information about parking, trees, bike lanes, sidewalks, lighting, outdoor seating, plantings, and so on and so forth. They presented on the different sections of the project area, such as Main St., Central Square, Gilbo Ave., and Railroad Square.

Ms. Powell asked if these are proposals or part of the active plan. Mr. Roberge replied that the project is in final design. He continued that what they are seeing now went through the community process; the Technical Review Committee that met bi-weekly for a couple years; and multiple meetings with the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee; and was approved by the City Council. The concepts are all approved, and now the project is in final design, and he and Mr. Corning are going around to get input on some of the details.

Ms. Zerba asked what will happen to all the bricks in Railroad Square that were donated by people. Mr. Roberge spoke of how the specific materials are still under consideration by the design team, and how they work with the Technical Review Committee, comprised of various City staff members, and how they will get input from the MSFI Committee about the materials used. He spoke of the options, such as brick, concrete pavers, or poured concrete. He and Mr. Corning continued with the presentation.

Mr. Clements stated that he wants to clarify Ms. Zerba's question. He asked if there is history behind the literal bricks that are currently in Railroad Square. Ms. Zerba and other HC members replied yes, they are donor bricks. Mr. Clements stated that the issue, then, is more than determining what the preferred material is for hardscape, as it sounds like there is history with the existing bricks. Mr. Roberge replied that Railroad Square was refurbished in the mid- to late-1980s. He continued that they (Stantec/the design team) can take a look at that, because that (history of donor bricks) is important.

Mr. Roberge and Mr. Corning continued their presentation of the design elements of Central Square and spoke of the details still to be decided.

Mr. Clements asked if the bollard lights at the head of the square will be compatible with the streetlights and signal lights. Mr. Roberge replied yes, and showed examples of designs. Ms. Zerba asked if the lights will be (dark sky compliant). Mr. Roberge replied yes.

Ms. Zerba complimented the design and asked about the construction schedule. Mr. Roberge replied that it will be underway by approximately May 2025, and it will be a two- or three-year project. He gave information about the different phases of the project.

Ms. Zerba asked about the outlets added throughout the downtown. She asked how Stantec will do those so they look nicer. Mr. Roberge spoke of how they will be designed to be as subtle as possible, and spoke about the solar panels that will power everything.

Chair Powell asked if the HC's opportunity to give feedback is right now only, or if they can give feedback later, and if so, until what date. Mr. Roberge replied that the goal is to deliver the final design to the MSFI Committee in late February. He continued that the HC can give Stantec feedback by December or January.

Mr. Clements asked if Mr. Roberge can get the HC some design cut sheets, as a rationale for the features such as the archway, lighting, benches, other fixtures, and whatever elements they want to have the heritage of the community represent and reflect. The HC would like to be able to weigh in on those choices. Chair Powell stated that she would add plantings to the list as well. Discussion continued. Mr. Roberge showed and spoke about the materials precedent in the presentation's appendix. He stated that the design team would also like the HC's feedback on how to do the archway at Railroad Square, such as whether they should use old iron and old rail ties.

The HC decided to meet in December, with the visuals, to discuss these topics. Mr. Clements stated that he will send the materials to the group ahead of time, and he will determine the appropriate method for the HC to convey their feedback, such as a letter to the MSFI Committee, a letter to the full City Council, or a letter to Stantec directly.

Brief discussion continued. HC members thanked Mr. Roberge and Mr. Corning and shared positive feedback about the project as a whole.

#### **4) Adoption of the 2025 Schedule**

Chair Powell stated that the proposed meeting schedule is in the agenda packet. She continued that she thinks the idea is to have a schedule to meet monthly but pick and choose when to sometimes meet every other month. Mr. Clements replied yes, they can adopt a monthly schedule and he will book the meeting room for every month, and then they can adjust as needed, based on the HC's volume of business.

Chair Powell made a motion to adopt the Heritage Commission's 2025 meeting schedule as presented. Ms. Zerba seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

5) **Staff Updates**

A) **Joint Heritage and Historic District Commission Meeting – January 2025**

Mr. Clements stated that the joint meeting last year was very successful and greatly appreciated. He continued that for the joint meeting in January 2025, they hope to have something to work on. The Historic District Commission (HDC) applied for a CDG grant to do an inventory of some unranked properties in the district, and they would like the HC's assistance with it. When that meeting takes place, the HC will get all of the needed information ahead of time. The date has not been determined yet; it will be either the HC's usual time slot or the HDC's. Chair Powell suggested she, the HDC chair, and Mr. Clements talk before the December meeting to get that figured out. Mr. Clements agreed. Chair Powell spoke of how she and the HC are looking forward to the collaboration.

6) **New Business**

Chair Powell asked if there was any new business. (No).

7) **Next Meeting – January 8, 2025**

Chair Powell stated that they will meet December 11.

8) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

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