

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

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

**Wednesday, January 13, 2021**

**4:00 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Cauley Powell, Chair  
Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair  
Rose Carey  
Councilor Gladys Johnsen  
Louise Zerba, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Erin Benik  
Kelly Ballard

Tara Kessler read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

**1) Call to Order**

Rose Carey called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM. Roll call was taken.

**2) Minutes of Previous Meeting - August 19, 2020, September 15, 2020, October 14, 2020 Meeting**

Louise Zerba made a motion to approve all three previous sets of minutes as presented (August 19, 2020, September 15, 2020 and October 14, 2020). The motion was seconded by Rose Carey and passed unanimously.

**3) Election of Chair & Vice Chair**

Rose Carey stated she would like to step down as Chair. She made a motion to nominate Cauley Powell as Chair. The motion was seconded by Louise Zerba and passed unanimously. Cauley Powell accepted the position of Chair.

Rose Carey stated she would like to see Susan DeGidio remain on as Vice Chair, Cauley Powell agreed. Louise Zerba made a motion to nominate Susan DeGidio as Vice Chair.

The motion was seconded by Rose Carey and passed unanimously. Susan DeGidio accepted the position.

#### **4) Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Project/Website**

Tara Kessler provided an overview of the discussion from the previous meeting on Neighborhood Heritage planning. She stated the idea is to pick an area in the City of Keene and work to better understand the neighborhood's boundaries and history and celebrate its heritage, through a variety of mediums. There was general consensus that it makes the most sense to begin the project by inviting the public to share their stories and photos relating to their history in an area of their choosing in Keene. Followed by having the commission identify a neighborhood to focus on based on the community feedback they receive. Tara Kessler asked if everyone agreed with this assessment from the last meeting and all members nodded in agreement.

Tara Kessler stated the next step discussed was for staff to start work on a website for the commission, which she had started drafting. Tara Kessler showed the website to everyone and covered each section and feature she had built thus far. She mentioned the content creation was done using a free website platform and suggested it might be worth investigating how much it would cost to upgrade to a paid program, for better quality in features and tools. The overview of the website went as follows:

- Landing Page: Tara Kessler stated if they are going to be soliciting information from the public it would be a good idea to have that on the landing page and she created a space for that to happen. She noted that the commission will need to choose what pictures they'd like to see displayed on the landing page. Louise Zerba added that she liked how the page had scrolling pictures at the top.
- About Page: An overview of the Heritage Commission, which will eventually have links for signing up to become a member.
- Projects Page:
  - Workshops – A place for details on current or upcoming workshops.
  - Research – Research from the City of Keene can be turned into a digital format and linked to this research section.
  - Preservation – Tara Kessler stated that any preservation efforts, like the Stone Arch Bridge project, would go in this section.
  - Walking Tours – Tara Kessler showed four areas she included for walking tours: School Street Neighborhood, Downtown Historic District, Urban Barns and Carriage Houses, and Lower Main Street. She stated that no additional information would be needed to develop walking tours around these areas, it would be a matter of forming the tours online and digitalizing the paper walking tours. A demonstration ensued on the features of the walking tours using the School Street Neighborhood as an example. This included a photo of each area on the walking tour map with a description alongside. Tara Kessler noted the tours can be navigated on desktop and mobile phone.

- Your Stories and Photos - A place to collect data from the community in 3 different formats: photos, videos/audio, and documents. Tara Kessler explained that essentially anyone could upload a photo using this tool but a drawback is the inability to add a description to the photo. She stated the audio feature allows visitors of the site to record and post right on the page, but she will need to check on the maximum length allowed. Louise Zerba asked if someone submitted an inappropriate photo would there be a way to prevent that? Tara Kessler replied no, which was an example of why they should likely investigate paying for higher quality features, so that there could be an administrator who has to approve the photos before they post to the public.
- Upcoming Events - This links to Eventbrite, so any events posted in Eventbrite for the commission would automatically upload to this section on the website.
- Contact Page

The commission collectively stated they loved what Tara Kessler had done with the website so far and thanked her for her work. Rose Carey inquired on whether or not this would interfere with what the CLG (Certified Local Government) grant was going to do for them. Tara Kessler responded that is up for discussion.

Tara Kessler stated the website she showed was just a start and welcomed any feedback from the committee. Brief discussion ensued about before and after photos being included on the website. Tara Kessler mentioned a tool she found that allows for this to happen in a unique way, by dragging a slider horizontally over a photo to reveal a before or after photo behind it.

Councilor Gladys Johnsen asked where on the website the names of people on the commission would go and if she'd add their pictures and their stories. Tara Kessler replied that information could go on the About Page directly, or a link out to another member page. Louise Zerba suggested they only list names and terms of office, and not pictures or other information. No final decision was made.

Chair Powell commented that she liked how the website serves their specific project but also acts as a repository for the back catalog of work. Chair Powell suggested that the Keene Public School students could possibly do interviews or help with pictures. Rose Carey added that nursing home residents are another great way for a different generation to contribute. Chair Powell noted the website could be something they leave up for people to continue adding their stories for years to come, if they can maintain the domain.

Councilor Gladys Johnsen asked if Keene State College (KSC) would be included in this project and Louise Zerba responded that they would be included in the Lower Main Street part of the project because a lot of KSC buildings are located in that area.

Rose Carey stated in terms of narrative they don't actually have a lot on the Downtown Historic District but there are plenty of photos. Tara Kessler clarified that they have files for each downtown building but they've never really had a place to share the information.

This website would be a great way to share all the history that's been collected. Louise Zerba asked if these files are on paper or electronic. Tara Kessler responded each property has an electronic inventory, but there are additional files like hand-written notes from volunteers, that could be added to a narrative that aren't electronic. There are also digital photos but there are gaps in time.

Louise Zerba asked how everyone could help. Tara Kessler stated it would be helpful to know what the commission feels is the most important format to use for collecting data/information (photos, documents, audio recordings). She can then find the best tool and from there they can discuss how to get the word out and decide what to do with the data. Louise Zerba stated she loved the walking tour photos with the narratives. Chair Powell stated the visuals are great in a map setting but wondered if telling stories could be a better way as far as exploring the neighborhoods and how people existed within them. Rose Carey agreed and added they mostly want to know what the neighborhood was to the people who live there, was it working class, upper class, social groups, businesses, stores, schools, etc. Tara Kessler replied that it sounded like these suggestions all related back to having a map-based function where people could add/upload information to geography. Rose Carey stated, using the Carpenter Street neighborhood for example, they could go in and take photos and talk with residents and record their stories, or speak with people in nursing homes who say they used to live there. She stated the Neighborhood project is more about what it's like today and where it's going, with some of the history built into it. Louise Zerba mentioned she'd like to see something around the Italian neighborhood near Island Street. Chair Powell added it would be great if each person could pin photos from certain dates or neighborhoods and everyone could see and interact by posting their own photos related to the original post.

##### **5) Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Application**

Tara Kessler revisited the conversation about the CLG grant application and stated they had submitted a Letter of Intent to develop walking tours on a web based platform; however, now that she had been able to create the walking tour on the new website with ease, she wondered if they should change the scope of the grant. She suggested they might change it to developing this website, with the walking tours included, and hiring a web developer for expertise in the areas of developing a map based, crowdsourcing/content management tool for pinning photos, adding narratives, etc. Chair Powell wondered what the odds are that they'd approve the scope change of the grant. Tara Kessler replied that she thinks they would be amenable to this because they appreciate the work that's being done and frequently reference the City of Keene's work.

Tara Kessler stated that she met with representatives from NH Division of Historical Resources to discuss the Letter of Intent that was submitted. They suggested that the Commission commit to one format for the walking tours, such as a mobile phone based tour or one for desktop computers. The other was to commit to sharing what ends up being produced and learned with others in the state. She stated she could call them to discuss possibilities because they recently gave an extension until February 18, 2021 to submit an application.

Tara Kessler explained there's a large match component to this grant, 40%. They take in-kind time so volunteer time can be counted. Rose Carey commented that she would be happy to dedicate a substantial amount of time to obtain the match for this project and that she has worked with websites before and is happy to learn more to be able to help. Tara Kessler stated for a \$10,000 grant the match requirement would be \$6,668. In other words, the total project cost would be \$16,668, the commission would provide 40% of that with in-kind match, which would be \$6,668, and then they'd get \$10,000 to spend without having to provide cash match. Louise Zerba asked if the \$6,668 in-kind match would be doable. Tara Kessler responded she felt it would be doable because this could include time consulting with a web developer and working on anything they'd require from the commission to carry out their work. She stated this commission's annual budget goes back into a fund every year and it accrues. They have about \$11,000 saved, which could act as back-up if a cash match is needed.

Councilor Gladys Johnsen asked if they have a photographer or do they take their own pictures. She also offered to write a letter to the editor and is willing to help interview folks. Chair Powell suggested that they lock in the website first before they start collecting materials and asked how long it might take for the grant to decide if they will accept the change in scope. Tara Kessler responded that the grant would typically begin July 1, 2021, which is when they could start using the funds, and they would need to expend the funds and completely close out the project by September of 2022. She mentioned they would also need to see if whomever they consult for web development can commit to that timeframe. Chair Powell stated that based on the grant timeline they won't actually start collecting any information until the summer, and thus suggested they get the website to where they want it to be as a first priority before launching in the summer.

Louise Zerba made a motion to authorize Tara Kessler to consult with the NH Division of Historical Resources about changing the scope of the proposed grant application to be the development of a web based tool for crowdsourcing. Cauley Powell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Rose Carey wondered if they could create a plan for the time and duties needed for each member with regards to in-kind match. Tara Kessler stated she will do this by estimating her time and divide the remainder by volunteer hours. She will consult with Chair Powell about what's realistic for each member. Chair Powell stated if anyone thinks of feedback they can email Tara Kessler. Tara Kessler stated she will send out a link for the website to all members once she fixes the viewing issue on different screens.

#### **6) Membership Recruitment Video**

Tara Kessler stated the City of Keene is asking boards to do 5 minute interviews as to why they are on the committee/board. They plan to use those videos as a recruitment tool. She is going to touch base with Chair Powell on this in the future, since they were running short on time.

7) **Updates**  
**Next Meeting**

Tara Kessler stated the next meeting is March 10, 2021. She stated the zoom meeting invites show the meetings taking place monthly, which was an error, and clarified that the meetings are held every other month.

8) **Adjourn**

Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 4:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Tara Kessler, Senior Planner