

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

4:30 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Councilor Gladys Johnsen
Rose Carey
Marilyn Huston
Brian Lee
Louise Zerba, Alternate

Staff Present:

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair
Erin Benik

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. Roll Call was taken.

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – May 12, 2021

Louise Zerba made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting. Chair Powell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3) New Member Introduction

Chair Powell noted that there are two new members to the Commission, Marilyn Huston and Brian Lee. Each member introduced themselves and their interest in serving on the Commission. Chair Powell provided an overview of the work of the Commission and other members provided information on the types of projects that the Commission has undertaken in the past few years.

4) Updates

A) CLG Grant FY 2022

Ms. Kessler reminded the commission that they had been awarded funding to develop a web based tool, which would allow members of the community to upload information related to a specific location in Keene. She went on to note that they have \$10,000 to hire a consultant to

develop the tool based on a specific area of Keene, which will showcase the area's development over time with stories and photos, etc. The commission had previously chosen the Italian neighborhood.

Ms. Kessler reported that the City had signed off on the grant agreement and they are awaiting confirmation that Federal funds have been allocated. Once that takes place, the Governor and Executive Council will sign off and the commission can move forward with hiring a consultant.

B) LCHIP

Ms. Kessler stated that they had planned to apply for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant for design work for the remaining improvements to the Stone Arch Bridge, and did submit a Letter of Intent; however, they were not able to obtain the required \$25,000 cash match in time and thus have chosen to hold off on that grant for the current year. She reminded the Commission that this specific grant was to finalize work on the Stone Arch Bridge and restore it to its original condition, with additional fall protection. Ms. Kessler further explained that the big picture of this project is to connect the Bridge to the Cheshire Rail Trail, as part of the Transportation Heritage Trail Project, so there would be three different types of bridges along the route.

C) Urban Barn Inventory Project Discussion

Ms. Kessler reported that their current grant for the Urban Barn Inventory Project is coming to a close. The historic resource consultant is wrapping things up on their inventories and the commission should be able to undergo outreach with property owners and the public sometime around September, 2021.

Short discussion ensued about outreach efforts. Ms. Carey suggested a pictorial display in business windows along Main Street to help bring awareness to the public. She added that it could be a great lead into the Italian Neighborhood project as well.

Councilor Johnsen suggested something similar to a past event they had done at the Recreation Department where they set up cardboard displays with photos and information for people to walk through and view. Ms. Carey stated the courthouse would also be a good location but noted that the Recreation Center is in the neighborhood they inventoried so it may be the better choice.

Ms. Kessler summarized that the board was leaning towards having both a window/public display of information as well as an event, at possibly the Recreation Center, with speakers and inviting the property owners.

Ms. Carey added that Richard Kiphutt, who did the Historical Barn Tour, contacted her about an archiving course at Keene State College. She felt it may help with the project if one or a few of them attended the course and stated she would find out more information. Ms. Kessler addressed

Chair Powell's question about available funds for the course by stating that the commission has an annual fund they could use for such instances.

Chair Powell suggested they settle on public event information before the next meeting, which would require a working group.

D) Other

5) Continued Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Project/Website

Chair Powell showed everyone the map indicating the Italian Neighborhood boundaries they had chosen and guided everyone to the consultant application in their handout.

A) Review of Consultant Proposal

Ms. Kessler stated that she underwent a broad search for a consultant who could do both web development and spatial analysis and came across the individual Ray Corson of CGIS Solutions. The individual currently works for the town of Peterborough and has experience performing the type of work this project requires. His proposal describes development of the tool as well as ongoing maintenance, with a total cost of \$10,000. She offered to invite Mr. Corson to present at the next meeting if the commission decided to move forward, and noted that it was up to them to decide how much search and review they wanted to undergo to find a consultant.

Chair Powell asked if Mr. Corson had provided a timeline for completion of the project. Mrs. Kessler replied that he is aware of their timeline and could have the project completed by June of 2022. She suggested they hire a consultant by October, have he or she create a demo and bring it back to the commission for review, and then move forward with creating the tool for the Italian Neighborhood. Several members of the commission agreed that they were inclined to accept the candidate.

Chair Powell then asked if the City had the capacity to take over hosting the tool or if the consultant would be retained to do that. Ms. Kessler stated that they could take over maintaining the tool and could potentially reach back out to the consultant if there were upgrades needed in the future. There was slight concern from the commission that they couldn't view samples of the consultants work and Ms. Kessler stated she would have him send in samples prior to their next meeting.

Discussion ensued about how to go about obtaining information and photos for the Italian Neighborhood. Ms. Huston offered to go to the Historical Society for information on the Italian neighborhood. Several commission members had contacts they had not had a chance to reach out to, and they planned to do that within the next month or so:

- Councilor Johnsen: Italian Club
- Ms. Zerba: Timothy Carbone and/or Dennis Ditullio
- Chair Powell: Victor Dintino

- Ms. DeGidio: Mary Ellen Angelo
- Tara Kessler: Jim Sterling
- Aaron Lipsky photographer suggestion

Chair Powell reminded the commission that they were looking to obtain photos, audio files, and possibly videos. More specifically, for the contacts they had previously identified, they wanted to be sure to ask them their view of the boundaries for the Italian Neighborhood, and compare to the map the commission had defined. A few ideas were to obtain river stories or stories from the Red Sox holding and exhibition game in the area. Chair Powell noted that the sharers of information don't necessarily have to live or have grown up in the neighborhood, but could be people who visited and have anecdotes that occurred there. She added that they could potentially come up with prompts for instances where individuals don't have information to share off-hand.

Mr. Lee brought up a non-profit based in Brooklyn called Story Corps. He noted that they got started by doing guided interviews in booths and suggested the commission might have a similar event where people come downtown to share stories.

Chair Powell suggested somehow including students and schools as well, possibly having the students utilize the tool to research neighborhoods. Mr. Lee added that they could interview parents and grandparents. Ms. Kessler suggested there be a good amount of pre-planning when working with schools.

- 6) **Next Meeting – September 8, 2021**
- 7) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner