



Heritage Commission

Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
3 Washington St, Keene, NH 03431

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** – Roll Call
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
February 14, 2024 – Regular Meeting
March 13, 2024 – Joint Meeting
- III. **2022 CLG** – Recovering Black History in Keene Project
- IV. **2021 CLG** – Italian Neighborhood Heritage Project
- V. **Staff Updates**
- VI. **New Business**
- VII. **Next Meeting** – May 8, 2024
- VIII. **Adjourn**

1 **City of Keene**
2 **New Hampshire**

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5 **HERITAGE COMMISSION**
6 **MEETING MINUTES**
7

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

4:30 PM

**Council Chamber,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Marilyn Huston
Julie Emineth
Rose Carey, Alternate
Louise Zerba, Alternate

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Members Not Present:

Molly Ellis, Vice Chair
Susan DeGidio, Alternate

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9 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

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11 Chair Cauley Powell called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and roll call ensued.
12

13 **2) Approval of January 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

14
15 Marilyn Hutson moved to approve the January 10, 2024 meeting minutes which was promptly
16 seconded by Julie Emineth. The motion carried unanimously.
17

18 **3) 2022 CLG – Recovering Black History in Keene Project**

19
20 Mayor J. Kahn joined the meeting at 4:33 PM.
21

22 Mr. Clements sent out an email providing the members with their individual list of names for
23 research. The members discussed their goals for the project and what they would be
24 researching. The consultant had exhausted all research available online so the members would
25 be looking at original materials that had not yet been digitized. They would upload any
26 information, including the source, to either a Google Doc or written on a form that Chair
27 Powell would then upload to the Google Doc. The members would try to find as much
28 information from one source as possible before turning it in to ensure a seamless exchange of
29 data.

30
31 Mayor Kahn had been following the project and was glad to hear it had been on the
32 Commission's map. He would like to recognize the Heritage Commission and link their efforts
33 to Juneteenth to bring awareness and engage the community of Keene around Black History.
34 The Commission worked with Rebecca Landry (Keene's Communications and Marketing
35 Director) who put out a short video to the City's social media page to introduce the community
36 to the project. They hoped to continue working with the City to engage the public as they
37 discovered more information.

38
39 Chair Powell discussed the method of research and thought it best to access the records in small
40 groups so that Bill Dow (Deputy City Clerk) could pull from one set of records at a time. These
41 records would include deed information, selectman records and town reports, among others.
42 The groups would have to consist of no more than three members, as to not create a quorum.
43 The members may contact Mr. Dow directly and inform Mr. Clements so he could collect
44 volunteer hours.

45
46 Ms. Hutson stated that she contacted the Keene Recreation Center to provide her information
47 on individuals buried at the Potter's Field Cemetery, as some of the graves of the slaves were
48 unmarked. She also stated that reaching out to the community for information such as old
49 photos and Bibles might be helpful in their research. Chair Powell stated that oral histories
50 would also be contributive and members should collect stories from the community whenever
51 possible.

52
53 Mr. Clements stated that their consultant, Kabria, would be at the Historical Society on April
54 12th to present information that her and her students had discovered. Chair Powell suggested
55 they connect with Kabria and Jenna Carroll (at the Historical Society) for a timeline of when
56 they would like the first round of information gathered from the member's research in order to
57 contribute to the presentation.

58
59 **4) 2021 CLG – Italian Neighborhood Heritage Project**
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61 Will was still working on the data-loading and story-telling aspects of the website. Mr. Clements
62 would order the hard drive for the media to go to the Historical Society.

63
64 **5) Joint Heritage & Historic District Commission Meeting – March 13, 2024**
65
66 The HC will host a meeting on March 13, 2024 at 4:30 PM where members of the Historic
67 District Commission would join to discuss the missions of each Commission and the history of
68 the projects they had worked on. Mr. Clements and Chair Powell would meet with Chair Sophia
69 Cunha-Vasconcelos of the HDC to come up with the agenda for the meeting. The members
70 discussed the mission of the HDC and how they might come together to assist on the work they
71 had been doing. Chair Powell stated that they had previously discussed outreach to the public,
72 such as mailers, to differentiate the two Commissions. The Master Plan Consultant, David,

73 would also sit in on the meeting. Mr. Clements would reach out to him for any ideas on what the
74 HC might prepare in advance of the meeting.

75

76 **6) Staff Updates**

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78 None presented.

79

80 **7) New Business**

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82 Chair Powell stated that they could begin thinking about submissions for the next CLG cycle,
83 perhaps aligning with the HDC. Members discussed looking at at-risk structures in the
84 community, taking inventory of houses in the School Street neighborhood, as well as creating an
85 interactive map of before and after photos of the old houses in the Historic District as potential
86 future projects. The members would continue to think about future CLG Projects to discuss
87 further at the April meeting.

88

89 Chair Powell asked Mayor Kahn if they had a City Council appointee as their past appointee had
90 left. The Mayor replied that he did not at the time but the Commission could write a letter to
91 himself and the City Clerk to put it on the Council's agenda for consideration.

92

93 Mayor Kahn noted that there many vacancies on both Heritage Commission and the Historic
94 District Commission and that the openings were hard to fill. Chair Powell asked if it was about
95 the time of the meetings or a lack of interest because they are less glamorous than other
96 committees. Mayor Kahn stated that he wasn't sure but from his perspective, both the Historic
97 District and Heritage Commission have a lot of overlap and the missions of both committees
98 blend together.

99

100 General discussion on the similarities and differences of the two committees occurred. Members
101 noted a lack of interest in serving a regulatory function. Mayor Kahn stated that there was an
102 argument to be made for having one or two committees, but he believed there is a lack of interest
103 in new membership for both.

104

105 **8) Next Meeting – March 13, 2024**

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107 The next meeting will be a joint meeting held with members from the HDC at 4:30 PM on March
108 13, 2024.

109

110 **9) Adjournment**

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112 There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:27 PM.

113

114 Respectfully submitted by,

115 Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker

116
117 Reviewed and edited by,
118 Evan J. Clements, AICP - Planner

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5 HERITAGE COMMISSION
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Molly Ellis, Vice Chair
Marilyn Huston
Rose Carey, Alternate
Louise Zerba, Alternate

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner

Members Not Present:

Julie Emineth
Susan DeGidio, Alternate

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10 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

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12 Chair Cauley Powell called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and roll call ensued.

13
14 The members of the Historic District Committee present at the joint meeting were as follows:
15 Chair Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Vice Chair Hope Benik, Anthony Ferrantello, and Russ
16 Fleming

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18 **2) Update – Historic District Commission**

19
20 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos explained the purpose and responsibilities of the HDC, citing their
21 website landing page, she read, “Created to preserve the heritage and visual character of the City
22 of Keene by regulating the compatibility of alterations to existing building structures and sites
23 within the downtown Historic District and collaboration with city departments and other
24 agencies.” She continued by explaining some of their purposes, to include strengthening the
25 economy of the City by protecting and enhancing the attractiveness of the community to
26 residents, tourists and visitors, promoting the use of the Historic District for education, prosperity
27 and general welfare of the community. She went on to explain the geographical scope of the
28 Historic District as well as their responsibilities, which include adopting rules and procedures,
29 adopting resource ranking lists, approving or disapproving applications for certificates of
30 appropriateness, and requesting reports and recommendations from city departments and
31 agencies. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos went on to detail their past projects, such as the creation of

32 outdoor seating, installation of exterior HVAC equipment, installation of cell towers and solar
33 arrays, the replacement of windows and doors, the installation of the ramp on the Senior Center,
34 as well as the demolition of 147 Main Street after the fire. In 2023, the HDC began sending
35 mailings to all of the property owners in the Historic District to inform them of what it means to
36 be in the district. This year, the HDC would rank the unranked properties within the 2011
37 Historic District expansion.

38

39 **3) Update – Heritage Commission**

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41 Chair Powell stated that the HC is an advisory board and focuses on education and public
42 awareness, and celebrating the heritage of the City’s culture. She went on to explain the two
43 major CLG grants that they had run through their Commission. The first being the 2021 Italian
44 Neighborhood Project where they received funding to build a website as well as a crowdsourcing
45 tool to involve community members in deciding on the story of their own neighborhood. The
46 second CLG grant was the Recovering Black History Project that would add to the
47 unacknowledged history of the area from the early 1800s up to the 1920s.

48

49 **4) Discussion – Promotion and Preserving Keene’s Historical and Cultural History**

50 **A) Mayor’s Proposed Commission Merger**

51

52 Mayor Jay Kahn stated that one of his rolls was to fill commissions and that he had trouble
53 filling the HDC. He stated, out of practicality, he thought it may be best to merge the two
54 commissions for better sustainability. State statute allows for HCs to take on a Historic District
55 role and vis versa. He believed that both bodies would be sensitive of the needs and
56 understandings of the other. Mr. Fleming stated that creating one body would be more efficient
57 on the regulatory side but that the HC is an advisory board and the HDC is regulatory. He
58 suggested having someone from the HC also sit on the HDC board in order to create more
59 interaction between the two boards. Vice Chair Hope Benik questioned if the two commissions
60 merged, would that ultimately result in HC members being drafted to fill HDC positions. Chair
61 Powell stated that she had confidence that Mayor Kahn would be able to fill the empty positions,
62 as his term had just begun. Ms. Hutson stated that she believed that there is not enough
63 promotion or education on the two commissions and that they would be able to fill the open
64 positions if the community knew about them. Mayor Kahn stated that the two roles do bleed
65 over, as education and regulation aren’t that dissimilar as there is an opportunity to educate
66 someone who is about to do something where there are regulations. Chair Powell stated that what
67 the HDC does is very specific and bounded by the Historic District’s borders whereas the HC is
68 not limited to certain buildings or structures, but involves the history of the people who have
69 lived in the City of Keene. Members believed that the two commissions could work together on
70 certain projects while still fulfilling their own individual roles.

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72 **B) Keene’s Heritage and the Master Plan Update**

73 The CEO of Future IQ, David Burrell, and the VP of Foresight Research, Heather Branigan,
74 were present at the meeting.

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Mr. Burrell explained that they were sitting in on boards and commissions for an exploratory discussion regarding the Master Plan. It was designed to be an open, transparent and inclusive process, and that they intended to have a lot of input from the community, boards and commissions. They were looking at targets of around 1,000 people to take surveys, as it was an important, once-in-a-decade conversation and reset about the direction of the community and where they fit into the world.

Based on the community’s larger aspiration, there were a couple of major phases to the plan. The first, from the time of the meeting through September, they called it the “visioning phase” in which they would explore the future speculation of how the community could evolve and what the preferred or shared vision is. The second phase, from September onward, would be the “chapters” of the Master Plan, where Mr. Burrell stated that the commission members’ expertise would be useful. He stated that it would be an open public process and, therefore, to a degree, they would be governed by whomever turns up, including those who are on boards and commissions. They were designing a lot of different input opportunities so there would be a chance for people to shape a future picture and narrative for the community. The focus would be on this for the next ten months and then it would devolve to groups like the commissions and to the staff to begin implementing it.

To make the new Master Plan, they would look at emerging trends and how the community could evolve, what the different plausible scenarios of the future are and what the implications of those are, and so on. Although the Master Plan is done once every ten years, communities also do intermediary updates as well.

The first step to the process, at the next Master Plan Steering Committee meeting, they would look at the 2010 Master Plan to see what goals were achieved, what was missed, and how they would move forward.

5) New Business

On April 12, the Historical Society would host a Lunch and Learn for the Black History Project where the students would present the work that they had done thus far.

6) Next Meeting – TBD

Chair Powell and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos would discuss another joint meeting at a later time.

7) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

118 Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker
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120 Reviewed and edited by,
121 Evan J. Clements, AICP - Planner