

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planner

Members Not Present:

All Present

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

(Name) called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM.

2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2024

Lousie Zerba made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 11, 2024. Rose Carey seconded the motion

3) Elections – Chair/Vice Chair

Lousie Zerba nominated Molly Ellis for Chair. Julie Emineth seconded the nomination, which passed by unanimous vote.

Marilyn Huston nominated Rose Carey for Vice Chair. Molly Ellis seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Discussion – Projects and Goalsetting for 2025

Lousie Zerba mentioned that the Italian Neighborhood project needs to be completely finished before the Commission started putting all of its effort into a new project.

Cauley Powell noted that she had some additional information that needed to be submitted to Will Schoefmann, GIS Coordinator to finalize the story map.

General discussion related to finalizing the Italian Neighborhood project occurred.

Rose Carey stated that today she went to Fact TV, which used to be Cheshire TV, at Heberton Hall. She continued that her idea, which Fact TV approved, was to have two or three Commission members learn to use their TV equipment and create a presentation or a series of presentations. It could give an overview of where Keene is right now, and include some of the historic buildings, maybe aerial views. It could be about 45 minutes or an hour. They could film from the library, on Main St., Emerald St. and so on and so forth. Fact TV would air it for the HC, once a week, and then it would go into a rotating file and be aired occasionally beyond that. The HC would own the rights to their content and thus be able to use the recordings for presentations as well.

Discussion ensued. Commission members asked if Fact TV staff would do the filming. Ms. Carey replied no, Commission members would learn to do the filming, with Fact TV equipment. Commission members spoke positively about the idea and brainstormed about what the content could be, who could do it and which locations to include, such as buildings on Court St., Washington St., and the Colony House on West St., hiking trails, parks and the bike path.

Ms. Powell stated that she loves the idea, but 45 to 60 minutes is a long time. She wonders how long it would take the Commission to get that much footage, write the script, edit and polish everything so it looks presentable and so on and so forth. Discussion ensued about the length of the presentation(s) and the challenges of editing. Ms. Carey spoke about how it can be unscripted. Ms. Huston gave information about a woman who has created some beautiful videos of Robin Hood Park and other parks, which she would probably share. Ms. Powell spoke about how she likes the idea of the videos humanizing the Commission so the viewers get to know them and the work they do, and of showing a snapshot of time for the community.

Ms. Powell questioned who the intended audience would be, such as whether they would be creating tourism content, or sharing factual information to be preserved as a historical record, and whether they are trying to reach community members or people outside of the community. Discussion ensued. Ms. Carey spoke about wanting to give an experience to people - especially those who are elderly, disabled or no longer live in Keene – who want to see what is happening in Keene. Others agreed and spoke of various beautiful places and experiences in Keene, throughout the seasons, that they could share, such as Central Square, gardens, historical chimneys, stained glass and “beautiful snippets of architecture in the oddest places.”

Discussion continued about how many video presentations to do, and when, and what a reasonable schedule and scope would be. Ms. Carey stated that the first step is having some Commission members train in the use of the equipment. Ms. Zerba brought up the question of how much research they would have to do – for example, who installed the stained glass

windows? – if their goal is to educate as well as show the visuals. Ms. Powell replied that it would be good to do interviews with people in town who could speak to those questions, which becomes a lot more involved, although the Commission does have a budget. Editing the footage is a lot more work than creating the footage. They could consider hiring someone for that.

Discussion continued about the video ideas, and about other historical buildings in town. Per Commission members questions, Mr. Clements shared information about the Main St. property next to the cobblestone. He continued that he likes the Commission's ideas about a video series and wants to suggest that the City's social media coordinator, Asah Kramer, would be a huge resource for the Commission. She does more short form content, like 10-15 second clips. She is very passionate about this work, and he thinks her degree is in videography. He can reach out to her and see if she can come talk with the Commission about the work, as the City's social media team is eager for new content. He is sure the City would love to be involved with anything the Commission wants to do. Discussion ensued about the length of video, how much footage they would need, editing and so on and so forth. Ms. Powell stated that there are many details to consider, such as media storage, rights issues and paperwork signifying people are allowed to participate and what the Commission can and cannot do with the content, audio/music rights and more. Mr. Clements replied that Ms. Kramer would probably be able to give some general help with the rights issues. Discussion continued. Mr. Clements stated that if the Commission intends to include trail walks, they might want to talk with staff in Parks and Recreation for ideas. He continued that he also likes the idea of capturing footage of Keene as it is now to document it for posterity. Ms. Emineth added, especially before the downtown infrastructure project begins.

Discussion continued with many ideas for videos. Mr. Clements cautioned the group to not bite off more than they can chew, and to instead start small and build up. Ms. Carey stated that she is not sure what options they have yet, but more discussion with the Fact TV station manager would help. Ms. Zerba spoke about how great it would be to include Alan Rumrill's storytelling somehow.

Ms. Houston suggested having Ms. Kramer and someone from Fact TV come talk with the Commission about how to start. Ms. Carey replied that they can invite them and see. Ms. Houston replied that they might want to talk with the City Attorney, too. Ms. Zerba stated that they should write down all of the pieces that will be involved with this. Ms. Powell replied that they could make a short list of topics and assign them to people based on their interests. Someone could do background research and come back and talk about what would work or would not work. Mr. Clements replied yes, they can ask Ms. Kramer to come to a meeting and talk about what she knows. He continued that Rebecca Landry, Assistant City Manager, has done a lot of research about the legal issues of capturing content in the public space, and more. She would be able to help them stay within the bounds. Ms. Fortson added that Ms. Landry and Ms. Kramer would want to review anything that is associated with the City because they might be able to, for example, incorporate some City branding. She continued that connecting with Alan Rumrill is a great idea, and also, Bill Dow, Deputy City Clerk, is in charge of the City's

records and archives. Mr. Clements replied that Mr. Rumrill and Mr. Dow both participated in a panel on the history of Keene for the NH Planning Association last spring. He continued that he is sure they would be happy to be involved with this project, too. Ms. Carey stated that she thinks the Commission should come up with what they think is important, what they would like to present, and then they can take it to the City and see what they think.

Ms. Ellis asked if the Commission needs to vote on whether to take this on as a project, or if anyone has other ideas. Ms. Powell stated that she had another idea, although the staff burden for CLG grants might not make it possible. She asked if the Commission wants to consider doing an inventory or something. Those are multiyear projects. They could think about if there is anything they want to consider doing, especially in inventory, that is no cost, if there are resources they think need to be identified in the community, or anything like that. Right now, the CLG is winding down for the historic district. Mr. Clements replied that it is done; they have no CLG grants going right now. He continued that he is not sure when the next round starts. Ms. Powell replied that she thinks January 1. So this would be for next year, something to keep on the back burner. Discussion ensued about the timelines. Ms. Powell stated that it might be something to talk about with the HDC when they have their joint meeting.

Ms. Houston asked if the bridge over Rt. 101 is still going to happen. Mr. Clements replied yes, it is part of the Heritage Trail project. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Carey stated that the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance does a lot with communities, and they (the HC) do not have them on their radar. She continued that she does not know if the Pearl Street School is a building that it is okay to just let it get demolished. Discussion ensued about this property. Ms. Carey stated that there might be ways to help save the building, and the NH Preservation Alliance has wonderful programs. They are having a training of some sort on March 4; she will send the information to the Commission. She recommends the Commission get to know them.

Ms. Fortson stated that to go back to the topic of the video series, she is excited about the idea and wants to reinforce that social media posts are always great, too. She continued that the Community Development Department used to have its own Facebook page, with a series of “Throwback Thursday” posts about different historical things in Keene. That might be good to look back on. Through the City’s social media, the Commission could do something similar, and highlight things like gardens, trails, unique historic features on buildings and so on and so forth. Mr. Clements replied yes, and if they generate a body of content to give Ms. Kramer, she can do that periodically. Ms. Fortson stated that they will have to see what the availability is for Ms. Kramer and the Communications Department. Discussion continued about all the different parts and how it is a lot to learn. Ms. Ellis noted that they can learn, and Commission members could each take a small piece of it, without needing to be overwhelmed by the whole thing. Ms. Carey stated that it would help to have it all written out.

After more discussion, Ms. Carey asked if she should schedule the training with Fact TV for those who are interested. She continued that they could talk more about the project at the next Commission meeting in April. Mr. Clements stated that even though March will have the joint meeting with the Commission and the HDC, the Commission could also have their own meeting in March, too, if they want. The group discussed who will attend the training, noting that they cannot have a quorum of members present, because then it becomes an official meeting. Mr. Clements suggested scheduling two training sessions, for three or fewer Commission members at a time. Ms. Ellis stated that in the interim, Commission members could be compiling lists of locations they would like to film at. Discussion continued about when to schedule the trainings. Ms. Powell asked if they should have another Commission meeting before scheduling any training, so the Commission can first figure out exactly what they want to pursue. Ms. Emineth agreed and spoke about how they do not need to rush, and she suggests Commission members come to the April meeting with ideas about what they would like to do, what their vision is and their thoughts on the topics and timeframe; and a list of whatever questions they have about what this entails. One episode a month is probably too much to start off with. Maybe by May or June they would have a better plan and be ready for the training.

Ms. Ellis asked if they want to have a detailed schedule of filming, or a storyboard, before they present it to (Fact TV). Ms. Powell replied that she thinks it would not need to be that detailed, but it would be beneficial to have a written, one-page overview of what the Commission intends to do and what their goals are. That would get the Commission members on the same page, and it would also make it easier to talk with others about it. Mr. Clements asked if she could share an example of a one-page project description. Ms. Powell replied yes. Mr. Clements replied that he thinks that is a good idea and they could go from there. Others agreed that that would be a good framework to have for the April meeting. Ms. Emineth stated that she would be glad to handle the project management, regarding the dates and schedule and keeping them on track, because project management is her forte. Others thanked her.

5) Staff Updates

Mr. Clements stated that the HC's next meeting will be a joint meeting with the HDC, on March 19, which is the HDC's slot. He asked if the HC also wants to meet on March 12 on their own, to bring these general ideas together to then start working on that one-page project description. Then, April could be for finalizing that project statement. He continued that if they do not meet in March, they could bring all their ideas to their April meeting and then finalize the project description in the May meeting. Discussion ensued, and the Commission decided to just have the joint meeting in March and have the next HC meeting in April.

Mr. Clements stated that the Master Plan Update project continues. He continued that it is officially in Phase II, which is the conceptualization phase. They are still doing public engagement and collecting more thoughts and opinions. Again, keenemasterplan.com is the website, and the discussion boards are still active. Task forces are active, with different members of the community focusing in on each of the six pillars. They will be the body of

people who help staff determine goals and strategies. They will do a land use future summit on June 3 at the Library. It will be more of an unveiling of the plan at that point.

Per Commission members' questions, Mr. Clements spoke briefly about the Downtown Infrastructure Project.

6) **New Business**

Ms. Carey stated that the Demolition Review Committee reviewed a building on East Surrey Rd. Per Commission members' questions, she gave more information.

7) **Next Meeting – Joint Heritage & Historic District Commission – March 19, 2025**

8) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Ellis adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

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