



Heritage Commission

Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 4:30 PM

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

AGENDA - Amended

- I. **Call to Order** – Roll Call
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

February 12, 2025 – Regular Meeting
March 19, 2025 – Joint Historic District & Heritage Commission Meeting
- III. **Discussion** – Projects and Goalsetting for 2025
- IV. **Historic Trail Marker** – Keene Glass
- V. **Discussion with Mayor Kahn** – United States Semisesquicentennial Celebration in 2026
- VI. **Staff Updates**
- VII. **New Business**
- VIII. **Next Meeting** – May 14, 2025
- IX. **Adjourn**

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

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planner

Members Not 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.

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

34

35 General discussion related to finalizing the Italian Neighborhood project occurred.

36

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

46

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

52

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

61

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

70

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

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

79

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

98

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

104

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

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

123
124 Ms. Ellis asked if the Commission needs to vote on whether to take this on as a project, or if
125 anyone has other ideas. Ms. Powell stated that she had another idea, although the staff burden
126 for CLG grants might not make it possible. She asked if the Commission wants to consider
127 doing an inventory or something. Those are multiyear projects. They could think about if there
128 is anything they want to consider doing, especially in inventory, that is no cost, if there are
129 resources they think need to be identified in the community, or anything like that. Right now,
130 the CLG is winding down for the historic district. Mr. Clements replied that it is done; they have
131 no CLG grants going right now. He continued that he is not sure when the next round starts.
132 Ms. Powell replied that she thinks January 1. So this would be for next year, something to keep
133 on the back burner. Discussion ensued about the timelines. Ms. Powell stated that it might be
134 something to talk about with the HDC when they have their joint meeting.

135
136 Ms. Houston asked if the bridge over Rt. 101 is still going to happen. Mr. Clements replied yes,
137 it is part of the Heritage Trail project. Discussion ensued.

138
139 Ms. Carey stated that the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance does a lot with communities,
140 and they (the HC) do not have them on their radar. She continued that she does not know if the
141 Pearl Street School is a building that it is okay to just let it get demolished. Discussion ensued
142 about this property. Ms. Carey stated that there might be ways to help save the building, and the
143 NH Preservation Alliance has wonderful programs. They are having a training of some sort on
144 March 4; she will send the information to the Commission. She recommends the Commission
145 get to know them.

146
147 Ms. Fortson stated that to go back to the topic of the video series, she is excited about the idea
148 and wants to reinforce that social media posts are always great, too. She continued that the
149 Community Development Department used to have its own Facebook page, with a series of
150 “Throwback Thursday” posts about different historical things in Keene. That might be good to
151 look back on. Through the City’s social media, the Commission could do something similar, and
152 highlight things like gardens, trails, unique historic features on buildings and so on and so forth.
153 Mr. Clements replied yes, and if they generate a body of content to give Ms. Kramer, she can do
154 that periodically. Ms. Fortson stated that they will have to see what the availability is for Ms.
155 Kramer and the Communications Department. Discussion continued about all the different parts
156 and how it is a lot to learn. Ms. Ellis noted that they can learn, and Commission members could
157 each take a small piece of it, without needing to be overwhelmed by the whole thing. Ms. Carey
158 stated that it would help to have it all written out.

159

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

176
177 Ms. Ellis asked if they want to have a detailed schedule of filming, or a storyboard, before they
178 present it to (Fact TV). Ms. Powell replied that she thinks it would not need to be that detailed,
179 but it would be beneficial to have a written, one-page overview of what the Commission intends
180 to do and what their goals are. That would get the Commission members on the same page, and
181 it would also make it easier to talk with others about it. Mr. Clements asked if she could share an
182 example of a one-page project description. Ms. Powell replied yes. Mr. Clements replied that he
183 thinks that is a good idea and they could go from there. Others agreed that that would be a good
184 framework to have for the April meeting. Ms. Emineth stated that she would be glad to handle
185 the project management, regarding the dates and schedule and keeping them on track, because
186 project management is her forte. Others thanked her.

187
188 **5) Staff Updates**

189
190 Mr. Clements stated that the HC's next meeting will be a joint meeting with the HDC, on March
191 19, which is the HDC's slot. He asked if the HC also wants to meet on March 12 on their own,
192 to bring these general ideas together to then start working on that one-page project description.
193 Then, April could be for finalizing that project statement. He continued that if they do not meet
194 in March, they could bring all their ideas to their April meeting and then finalize the project
195 description in the May meeting. Discussion ensued, and the Commission decided to just have
196 the joint meeting in March and have the next HC meeting in April.

197
198 Mr. Clements stated that the Master Plan Update project continues. He continued that it is
199 officially in Phase II, which is the conceptualization phase. They are still doing public
200 engagement and collecting more thoughts and opinions. Again, keenemasterplan.com is the
201 website, and the discussion boards are still active. Task forces are active, with different
202 members of the community focusing in on each of the six pillars. They will be the body of

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

205
206 Per Commission members' questions, Mr. Clements spoke briefly about the Downtown
207 Infrastructure Project.

208
209 **6) New Business**

210
211 Ms. Carey stated that the Demolition Review Committee reviewed a building on East Surrey Rd.
212 Per Commission members' questions, she gave more information.

213
214
215 **7) Next Meeting – Joint Heritage & Historic District Commission – March 19, 2025**

216
217 **8) Adjournment**

218
219 There being no further business, Ms. Ellis adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM.

220
221 Respectfully submitted by,
222 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

223
224 Reviewed and edited by,
225 Evan J. Clements, AICP
226 Planner

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

And

HERITAGE COMMISSION
JOINT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

4:30 PM

Council Chambers,
City Hall

HDC Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair
Louise Zerba
David Bergeron, Alternate
Russ Fleming, Alternate

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planner

HDC Members Not Present:

Hope Benik, Vice Chair
Councilor Catherine Workman
Peter Poanessa, Alternate
Anthony Ferrantello

HC Members Present:

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

HC Members Not Present:

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM. Roll call was conducted. David Bergeron & Russ Flemming were designated as voting members of the HDC.

2) Local Ranking of Unranked Properties in the Downtown Historic District

A) The two commissions will assign local rankings for properties that have reached their period of significance but are currently unranked

21 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked how Mr. Clements wanted the HDC and HC to go about this
22 process of ranking the unranked properties in the Downtown Historic District. Mr. Clements
23 replied that members have resource ranking forms, one for each property they are intending to
24 rank today. He continued that they also have the inventory forms that were prepared by the
25 consultant. They can follow the memo that was in the packet. There are seven properties. The
26 memo includes the resource rankings and the methodology behind how the rankings are
27 determined. The resource ranking forms will help guide them. The value of a resource is based
28 on the physical form – the architectural features that make it an example of the time in which it
29 was constructed – as well as the cultural and historical significance of the business or industry
30 that the resource represents. Both of those things together are used to determine the amount of
31 value the property adds to the district.

32
33 Mr. Clements continued that for example, speaking generally, there might be a building that is
34 less architecturally significant but is the last standing example of an industry that no longer
35 exists. It would still be historically significant and is valuable to the identity of the Historic
36 District and the City as a whole, which may lead to a Primary or a Contributing designation, as
37 opposed to a Non-compatible or an Incompatible designation. Something “Non-compatible” or
38 “Non-contributing” would be something that stands out, like a gas station, which there are many
39 of in town. Something that looks like a gas station, and does not look like a 1950s, Route 66,
40 iconic (location).

41
42 Ms. Zerba stated that she has a question. She continued that the HDC and HC have a list of
43 things that are different than what the consultant provided for them. She wonders how to blend
44 the two, knowing that (the consultant) is an expert in the field. Mr. Clements replied that the
45 form he handed out was used when the district was created, and will not be a one to one match.
46 He continued that the HC and HDC might decide that a specific category on the form is not
47 relevant or that they do not have the information they need. If they go through it and feel like
48 they do not have enough information to make a decision, they can choose not to. The form is a
49 guide; they are not beholden to it.

50
51 **1. 122 West Street – People’s United Bank – Built 1978***

52
53 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that 122 West St. was built in 1978, so it has about three more
54 years before it is part of the HDC’s remit. She continued that the form says there are no known
55 major alterations to the exterior of the People’s United Bank other than the replacement of the
56 sign with the current M&T Bank sign. The notes state, “*It retains character-defining features
57 such as long, low building profile, angular exterior with projected massing, flat brick walls,
58 horizontal brick orientation, and slightly indented ribbons of large, flat windows.*”

59
60 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that she (the consultant) recommended it be ranked as a
61 contributing resource. There are more details that can be reviewed as part of this discussion.
62 She asked for HC and HDC members’ thoughts.

63

64 Ms. Zerba stated that when she thinks of the historic district, she does not think of a building that
65 looks like this one, but it is close to 50 years old. She continued that at the time it was
66 constructed, banks were sort of long and without much ornamentation. She would go along with
67 the recommendation of ranking it as a Contributing resource, according to the times.

68
69 Mr. Fleming stated that it says its common name is “People’s United Bank,” but it has been
70 around for a few years now and he wonders if they should change that. Ms. Zerba replied yes, it
71 has had a few names. Mr. Fleming continued that he thinks it is an interesting piece of property,
72 because it was aspirational, the fact that it was going to be the headquarters for Keene Savings
73 Bank. When it was built, they were on the up and coming. Of course, there has been much
74 consolidation in the banking industry since then, but it says so much about the times. Beyond
75 that is the shape of the building and the massive amount of parking from when people used to
76 drive to the bank all the time. He thinks it has a lot of interest. His question is whether they
77 protect it much by calling it a Contributing resource, and whether that is the best they can do.

78
79 Mr. Clements replied that there are four ranking categories. He continued that there are only two
80 categories of regulation. There are the stricter protections granted to Primary and Contributing
81 resources, and less strict protection granted to Non-contributing and Incompatible resources.
82 Currently, all the unranked properties are granted the strictest protection. As they go through
83 this and decide if resources are Contributing or Primary, they will not be making the protections
84 stricter than they currently are required to be. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that to be clear,
85 there is no way to make the protections stricter than they already are. Mr. Clements replied that
86 that is correct, unless they were to change the regulations.

87
88 Mr. Fleming asked if it is correct that for the next three years, this property (owner) could do
89 whatever (she or he) wanted. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they would still have to
90 follow Planning (regulations), but with respect to the historic character, Mr. Fleming is right that
91 the HDC has no authority over this property until three years from now. She continued that to
92 answer his question, the property would receive the same protections if it is ranked Contributing
93 or Primary, and the most stringent protections they could offer.

94
95 Mr. Bergeron stated that as the report states, this property has been basically untouched in the 47
96 years it has been there. He continued that in comparison to the other buildings they are looking
97 at, he sees that this one is essentially the way it was originally built. His question is why it
98 would not thus be considered a Primary resource, given the fact that it has remained unchanged
99 for almost 50 years in the exterior of the building.

100
101 Mr. Clements stated that he will read, for the record, the difference between Primary and
102 Contributing resources:

103
104 *“Primary resource shall mean any building, structure, or site which contributes to the overall*
105 *historic and architectural significance of the historic district and was present during the period*
106 *of historic significance and possesses historic and architectural integrity with little or no*

107 *diminishment in value reflecting the character of that time or is capable of yielding important*
108 *information about the historically significant period. Qualities of the building, structure, or site*
109 *which contribute to the overall historic and architectural significance of the historic district*
110 *include but are not limited to setback, massing, height, materials, architectural features, and/or*
111 *fenestration.*

112
113 *Contributing resource shall mean any building, structure, or site which contributes to the overall*
114 *historic and architectural significance of the historic district and was present during the period*
115 *of historic significance, but which possesses some diminishment of significance due to*
116 *alterations, disturbances, or other changes to the building, structure, or site. Said diminishment*
117 *of significance to the district is not so substantial as to prevent the building, structure, or site*
118 *from possessing historic and architectural integrity reflecting the character of that time or being*
119 *capable of yielding important information about the historically significant period.”*

120
121 Mr. Clements continued that to answer Mr. Bergeron’s question, if the resource is truly
122 untouched and is an example of the period of its intended use and architectural style of the time,
123 it would be potentially Primary. Whereas Contributing resources have some degradation, but not
124 much.

125
126 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the consultant’s report says, “*Despite some loss of integrity*
127 *of setting due to modern construction in the area immediately surrounding the building, the*
128 *People’s National Bank retains integrity of location, design, and materials.”* She continued that
129 it sounds like maybe the Contributing resource was due to the setting as opposed to the building
130 itself.

131
132 Mr. Clements replied that the consultant did not specify the four ranking criteria; she ranked by
133 either Contributing or Non-contributing. He continued that it is thus up to the HDC and HC to
134 apply the City’s more nuanced definitions to the local ranking. The consultant was using the
135 criteria for the National Trust and the Park Service.

136
137 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if anyone wanted to make a motion regarding 122 West St., for
138 the property to go in as a Primary resource.

139
140 Ms. Zerba stated that when she spoke earlier about this being a Contributing resource, she had
141 not considered Mr. Bergeron’s comments. She continued that it has not been touched on the
142 outside since it was constructed.

143
144 Ms. Zerba made a motion to rank 122 West St. as a Primary resource. Ms. Carey seconded the
145 motion.

146
147 Mr. Fleming stated that they have to discuss the period of significance a little bit. He continued
148 that both this property and the next one on the list were built in the early 1970s. The significance
149 of that period is that it is when everyone started having cars. Things started spreading out to the

150 suburbs more and these buildings reflect the growing use of the car to get to the building, if
151 nothing else. He agrees with the Primary designation.

152
153 The motion passed by unanimous vote.

154
155 Mr. Fleming stated that he has one more comment about the site. He continued that inside the
156 building, the lobby contains a section of a huge tree that was removed from the property years
157 ago when the road was widened again.

158
159 **2. 166 West Street – Friendly’s Building – Built 1976***

160
161 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the former Friendly’s Building at 166 West St. is in current
162 use by an eye doctor. She continued that it was heavily renovated in 2021 with roof, siding, and
163 windows replaced and cupola removed. The consultant’s notes say, “*The general form and*
164 *massing of the building, however, have remained largely intact and carry over from the original*
165 *use as a branded Friendly’s restaurant of the mid 1970s.*” There is a lengthy note on integrity
166 and significance. The recommendation is a Non-contributing ranking due to the loss of integrity.

167
168 Mr. Fleming stated that he does not agree with that. He continued that it is not up to the standard
169 of the bank building next door, but it is essentially a damaged integrity. The consultant’s review
170 says that it still has the massing and such that could cause a passer-by to notice that it used to be
171 a Friendly’s. It has a lot of the same features (he spoke of earlier), welcoming the automobile
172 and so forth.

173
174 Mr. Fleming made a motion to make 166 West St. a Contributing resource. He continued that he
175 would hate to see something drastic done to the site to further take it away from what it was.

176
177 Ms. Ellis stated that she disagrees. She continued that she thinks it is definitely Non-
178 contributing. Friendly’s restaurants are a dime a dozen. It just looks like a Friendly’s that used
179 to be an eye doctor. In her opinion, it is nothing special, architecturally, now and when it was a
180 Friendly’s. She would say it is Non-contributing or even Incompatible.

181
182 Ms. Zerba stated that when it was constructed, at the time, this building was built to reflect the
183 building that was going to occupy it. She continued that all the Friendly’s throughout the United
184 States were constructed to be similar in appearance. The City appropriately allowed it to be built
185 the way it was built because it was built specifically for a Friendly’s.

186
187 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Friendly’s was quite the cultural phenomenon at the time.

188
189 Ms. Powell stated that if more of the integrity of the original Friendly’s building, including the
190 cupola or sign structure had been retained, perhaps it would be easier to imagine it as a
191 Contributing resource. She continued that the renovation to the eye doctor really did strip a lot
192 of the character that had given it the Friendly’s building appearance. She is not sure she would

193 recognize the building today as a former restaurant. Having lived here when it was still
194 Friendly's, it is easy to forget that the appearance has been changed so much. She is unsure if it
195 would fit in the Contributing category.

196
197 Mr. Bergeron stated that the change in windows is striking. He continued that Friendly's had
198 much larger windows on the side space, the entrance, and they had architectural features in the
199 windows. All of that has been removed. Now it just has the standard commercial windows as
200 opposed to what made the building look like a Friendly's.

201
202 Mr. Fleming replied that if you look at the photos side by side, looking at the massing in the
203 basic structure of the building, even though the cupola has been removed, he thinks you could
204 recognize that it is the same building. They will be talking about that with some of the other
205 buildings, too. For example, the roundhouse of the old train station is recognizable as a
206 roundhouse, even though it is now [something else].

207
208 Ms. Emineth stated that she agrees that you can tell (it is the same building) if you are looking at
209 the photos side by side, but that is because you are looking at them side by side. She continued
210 that she thinks if you were to drive into Keene today and did not know that the building used to
211 be a Friendly's, it would not be obvious that it used to be a Friendly's, the way an old Pizza Hut
212 building is obvious. She thinks this (former Friendly's building) has lost a lot of charm. She
213 agrees that it is a Non-contributing resource.

214
215 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Mr. Fleming made a motion for this to be considered a
216 Contributing resource, and she did not hear a second. Mr. Fleming replied that there was no
217 second. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she would entertain a different motion.

218
219 Ms. Ellis made a motion to consider 166 West St. a Non-contributing resource. Ms. Zerba
220 seconded the motion.

221
222 Mr. Fleming stated that he wants to clarify that when this was converted from the Friendly's, the
223 HDC had something to say about it. He continued that maybe Mr. Clements could talk to them
224 about what the HDC would have to say about it as a Non-contributing resource going forward.
225 Mr. Clements replied that the definition for Non-contributing resource acknowledges that this
226 could be a property that had character-defining features that have since been lost, and nothing
227 stops a property from being reevaluated. He continued that if someone wants to restore
228 architectural features that had been removed, there is always potential for a property to become
229 Contributing or Primary. The difference between Contributing or Primary is related to the
230 amount of degradation of the property itself.

231
232 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Mr. Clements to remind the HDC and HC, loosely, of what the
233 differences between "Contributing" and Non-contributing" are. Mr. Clements replied that a part
234 of it is just the level of review, where even minor alterations would require a trip to the HDC for
235 a Contributing or Primary resource, and a Non-contributing resource would likely just be

236 reviewed by staff administratively. He continued that there are pages and pages of very well-
237 articulated standards for Primary and Contributing resources, whereas the set of guidelines for
238 Non-contributing and Incompatible resources is much thinner.

239

240 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that to clarify, it is not that they (property owners of Non-
241 contributing and Incompatible resources) can do anything they want to their property; there is
242 still a level of oversight. Mr. Clements replied that is correct.

243

244 Ms. Zerba stated that she wants to mention again that the cupola was one of the Friendly's
245 features, so (its removal) would be another reason for perhaps calling this a Non-contributing
246 resource. She continued that that was one of (Friendly's) architectural features that was included
247 when it was constructed, which was removed, as well as the windows.

248

249 Ms. Powell asked if the outdoor walk-up window was part of the original design as well. Ms.
250 Zerba replied where the ice cream was sold, yes. Ms. Powell replied that that has been removed
251 or closed in well, based on the photo.

252

253 The motion passed with a vote of 8-1. Mr. Fleming was opposed.

254

255 **3. 194 West Street – TD Bank – Built 1972**

256

257 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this "TD Bank" building was built in 1972, which means it
258 is in its period of significance. She continued that the alterations include green trim at the roof
259 area, added in 2020. The notes say, "*Like the nearby People's United Bank, the building has a*
260 *long, low form with exterior detail emphasizing horizontal lines. The centralized entrance is*
261 *accessed through a recessed entry porch with large plate glass windows, creating a light and*
262 *open atrium at the building interior.*" There are comments about the integrity and significance,
263 which she will not read now, but invites people to review. The (consultant) recommends this be
264 a Contributing resource. As a reminder, the consultant used the two rankings "Contributing" and
265 "Non-contributing," so if the HDC and HC want to take the recommendation, they still need to
266 decide between "Primary" and "Contributing."

267

268 Ms. Ellis stated that she has a question which she does not think the consultant really got at. She
269 continued that she wonders, when they are deciding how to rank something, whether it matters
270 whether something is simply untouched, or untouched but also has particular architectural
271 significance, charm, or value.

272

273 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that her understanding is that the significance is not related to
274 charm. She continued that it is about whether the resource is a good representation of the era in
275 which it was built and those remaining consistent. As she understands it, there could be
276 renovations, but the characteristics would not be changed in the renovations. For example, she
277 personally is not a fan of 1970s architecture, but it is historic to the era, and buildings that are
278 good representations of what they were from that era are worthy of that classification.

279
280 Mr. Clements stated that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos's explanation is about 90% complete. He
281 continued that they also have to evaluate the resource's value to the district as a whole. (For
282 example), something might be a shining example of the district at the time in which it was built,
283 but actively conflict with the overall historic character of the surrounding area. (These properties
284 being discussed today) are all within the extension that was done in 2012, so they are not
285 necessarily comparing the property to Main St. That would not be fair or appropriate, because it
286 is in a different context. But within the overall footprint of the extension, they know the history
287 of this part of town and its relationship to the railroad, so it is a little bit more like that. This is
288 not easy. The HC and HDC are doing a good job with these nuanced decisions.

289
290 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she will try and give an example. She continued that if one
291 of these 1970s banks, say, was hanging out in the middle of the lovely, late 18th century
292 downtown, they could say that would potentially reduce the value because it detracts from the
293 feeling of that era in the downtown. Mr. Clements replied yes, it might be an example in its own
294 right within the context of the surroundings. It detracts from the historical vibe of a late 18th
295 century historic neighborhood, because it sticks out like a sore thumb.

296
297 Mr. Fleming replied that this is why he thought they should discuss the period of significance for
298 the buildings. He continued that they are not talking about the 1800s; they are talking about the
299 1970s. Mr. Clements replied especially considering that this part of West St. and Gilbo St. are
300 still fairly open, so they do not have that strong juxtaposition between, say, 1890s versus today
301 or the 1970s. They do not have a lot of that context, because not many of those old railroad
302 structures are left.

303
304 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if that answered Ms. Ellis's question. Ms. Ellis replied sort of,
305 but she still does not find unattractive 1970s banks significant in any way, so she finds this
306 difficult.

307
308 Ms. Powell stated that the consultant flags this property as being "in the international style." She
309 continued that her (Ms. Powell's) sense is that the international style usually involves a bit more
310 glass and is a bit more modern in feel. She does not know if it is the fact that this particular
311 building is square without a lot of defining elements. It has the bump-out for the open air walk
312 in. Beyond that, she is surprised to see it characterized as "being in the international style."

313
314 Ms. Ellis replied that to that point, she thinks this bank is just old. She continued that it does not
315 seem to be of any architectural interest. It does not seem like a great example of an architectural
316 style. It is just a bank that has been sitting there for about 50 years.

317
318 Ms. Carey stated that when West St. was developed and these buildings were put in, they were
319 all very modern for the time. She continued that they are all grouped into an architectural style
320 that represents the era they were built in. It is unfortunate that Friendly's has been diminished.
321 Otherwise, that would also be Contributing. Hopefully, it could be restored. But they are

322 picking apart an architectural style, not whether (this property) is Contributing. This is an era
323 that West St. was developed. They lost a lot of historic buildings to put these buildings in, and
324 this was a commerce center that shifted the focus of commerce of Main St., and they are
325 significant to the development of Keene, to the way we did business, and to the way that the
326 automobile facilitated that business. Still today, people park in these parking lots and walk
327 downtown, because there is parking there.

328
329 Ms. Carey made a motion to consider 194 West St. as a Primary resource. Mr. Fleming
330 seconded the motion.

331
332 Mr. Fleming stated that he does not see much difference between this and the M&T building,
333 except that M&T is a nicer building. He continued that the movie the Brutalist is playing at
334 Keene State the first weekend in April. Brutalist architecture was not pretty, necessarily, but it is
335 a famous style of architecture that will have its place in history. Ms. Ellis replied that she likes
336 brutalist architecture.

337
338 Ms. Powell stated that she was not alive in the 1970s but will say that this does not strike her as a
339 1970s building. She continued that to her, it looks like a big box store in design, which could
340 just be her own naivete and disconnection from the time period. She thinks the earlier bank that
341 is now the M&T Bank had more of what she would think of as the features from the time period.
342 The HC and HDC do not have any photos that show the exact opposite side of the page 1 image.
343 They just have the view looking south and east and then the view looking north and east.
344 Perhaps there is something she is not seeing. She has not been inside this building.

345
346 Mr. Bergeron stated that he seems to recall that the building did not start as a bank; it started as a
347 grocery store and was then renovated into the bank. He continued that that might be why it is not
348 completely the same or as coordinated as the other bank on West St., but it has been around
349 longer. Ms. Powell thanked Mr. Bergeron and stated that she had not realized that.

350
351 The motion to classify 194 West St. as a Primary resource passed by a vote of 7-2. Ms. Ellis and
352 Ms. Powell were opposed.

353
354 **4. 149 Emerald Street – Cheshire Railroad Repair Shops – Built 1866**

355
356 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that regarding alterations, *“In 1984, the modern shopping mall*
357 *was built to encompass several surviving 1866 Cheshire Railroad Shop buildings. The original*
358 *doors and windows were removed from the historic structures, and their eaves were extended to*
359 *create protected walkways along the north side of the building. A large addition was*
360 *constructed, adding a single-story addition to the south side of the structure and extending it to*
361 *the west.”* She continued that the notes include, *“In 1984, the surviving Cheshire Railroad*
362 *Locomotive Repair Shop, Black Smith & Mechanical Shop, Wood Work, and Car Repairs Shops*
363 *were incorporated into the east end of a large connected mini mall.”* Again, there are notes on

364 integrity and significance which she will not read aloud, in the interest of time. The
365 (consultant's) recommendation was Contributing resource.

366
367 Ms. Powell stated that she has a question regarding the notes in the significance and integrity
368 section discussing the renovations. She asked if they are meant to only be referencing the
369 elements that fit within what would make it a historic district property now and not the 1984
370 elements at all, or if they take the 1984 elements into consideration at this stage. Chair Cunha-
371 Vasconcelos replied that she thinks they have to take the 1984 elements into consideration and
372 how they might have degraded the historic value of the property.

373
374 Mr. Clements stated that it is also worth taking into account the consideration that those
375 additions did in an attempt to preserve the historic integrity as well, but they are sort of
376 evaluating the building as it is now. He continued that it is also worth noting that today the
377 City's own historic district regulations, as well as the guidelines under the National Historic
378 Trust, say that additions to historic resources should be complementary, not mimicry.

379
380 Ms. Powell stated that it was the note saying that the 1984 changes could be reevaluated in 2034
381 that threw her. Mr. Clements replied that that is just what the consultant said. The City needs to
382 take the whole property as one building because it is one building now. Ms. Carey stated that
383 they are including the roundhouse aspect of this as well.

384
385 Ms. Zerba stated that if this were more intact, it would be considered Primary. She continued
386 that she wonders if it should be considered Primary even with the degradation that has occurred,
387 in part because it was such a center for commerce and for the railroad in Keene at the time, and it
388 is a beautiful example of railroad architecture that probably would not have survived had it not
389 been repurposed in some way. She agrees that alterations remain that are compatible with the
390 historic nature of the building. It was not degraded in such a way that it is commercially more
391 useful. It is historically more useful than it is perhaps commercially, in her view.

392
393 Ms. Carey made a motion to consider 149 Emerald St. as a Primary resource. Ms. Zerba
394 seconded the motion.

395
396 Ms. Ellis stated that she loves this building, and she is happy they have what they have of it
397 because of how it has been repurposed, and she is not opposed to making it a Primary resource.
398 She continued that she thinks they need to talk about it more first, to make sure it absolutely fits,
399 because of what has been done to it. She is not sure. Ms. Carey asked what Ms. Ellis's
400 reservations are. Ms. Ellis replied that the building on either side of the roundhouse area is really
401 modern, such as the windows and eaves. She continued that she is not certain about the
402 technicalities of the regulations and defers to others.

403
404 Mr. Clements stated that a Contributing designation acknowledges that a resource has been
405 altered from its original architectural form. He continued that in the same way that a Non-
406 contributing resource can be elevated to a Contributing resource, a Contributing resource can be

407 re-evaluated and made Primary. Practically speaking, it is granted the same level of protection
408 with either a Primary or Contributing ranking. The Primary designation really acknowledges a
409 form in its current form is a shining example of the City of Keene’s historic district. That
410 designation should be reserved for buildings and sites that truly are that. He is grateful to not
411 personally be making this decision to parse out that distinction, because he could easily go either
412 way.

413
414 Mr. Fleming stated that based on that, and the fact that the property has not maintained its
415 original integrity as much as they would like to have, he agrees with Ms. Ellis that as long as
416 they can protect what is still there, he thinks it is a Contributing resource.

417
418 Ms. Powell stated that she thinks the 1984/2034 indicator might be a good moment to switch to a
419 Primary resource at that time. She continued that perhaps they could rank it as Contributing at
420 this stage, before that secondary element that is seemingly what they are all flagging as being
421 potentially at odds with the Primary designation, based on the overview Mr. Clements gave.

422
423 Ms. Zerba stated that the reason she supports it as a Primary resource is because she thinks a
424 great deal of effort went into making sure the renovations retained as much as possible of the
425 original rail yard. She continued that for example, when it was redone, the building could have
426 gone straight through without making sure the roundhouse was retained. Maybe what was done
427 is not the ideal, but it was moving with the times, and it is a good example of the best that they
428 could do with what existed and with what they wanted to have it become.

429
430 The motion failed with a vote of 2-9. Ms. Zerba and Ms. Carey voted in favor.

431
432 Ms. Powell made a motion to consider 149 Emerald St. as a Contributing resource. Mr.
433 Bergeron seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

434
435 **5. 104 Emerald Street – Dunn & Salisbury Lumber Building – Built Ca. 1900**

436
437 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this property’s current use is a retail store. She continued
438 that it was built circa 1900. Regarding alterations, *“The fenestration of the former lumber
439 storage building at 104 Emerald St. has been heavily altered with all second-floor windows
440 removed, primary entrance removed, and additional first floor window openings added. A
441 ramped entrance porch was added in the 20th century to the new entry door. All windows have
442 been replaced, and the original wooden clapboard siding covered with vinyl.”* She continued
443 that the notes say, *“The historic Dunn & Salisbury lumber storage and office building was
444 constructed around the turn of the 20th century and was home to Keene Industrial Paper
445 Company in the early 21st century.”* She will not read the notes on integrity and significance
446 aloud but encourages others to review them. The recommendation was for this to be considered
447 a Contributing resource. Again, she reminds everyone that this classification is one out of two,
448 Contributing or Non-contributing, so even if the HC and HDC follow that recommendation, they
449 have to further classify it.

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Mr. Clements stated that he wants to mention that this property is an example of what he was talking about earlier, where in some cases the form may have been significantly altered but it is a “last of its kind” sort of representation of the turn of the century railroad adjacent industries that are now few and far between in the city.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she has a clarifying question. She continued that Mr. Clements spoke about how a property should be pristine to qualify as Primary. She asked if that stands alone, or if that is impacted by the historical significance of the property as “last of its kind,” or if that is for the HC and HDC to decide. Mr. Clements replied that he thinks it is for them to decide. He continued that he thinks for something to really be Primary it has to kind of be both, or strongly one and even more strongly the other. There is more wiggle room with Contributing, where they can acknowledge that the resource has degraded but is of such cultural significance that it is worth protecting.

Ms. Zerba made a motion to designate 104 Emerald St. as Contributing. She continued that even though they have made many changes, such as the vinyl siding there now instead of the wood, the removal of the windows, and so on and so forth, when you look at it you know that this was the Dunn & Salisbury building at one time.

Mr. Fleming seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. 80-100 Emerald Street – Rawson Turning Factory – Built 1912

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the current use for this building from 1912 is mixed commercial and multiple dwelling. She continued that with respect to alterations, the notes include that *“When it was constructed in 1912, the building at what is now 80-100 Emerald St. consisted of just the 15x4 bay brick main block, and by 1924, a large single-story brick addition had been constructed off the back of the building. As the use of the building changed, so did some of the exterior features. Original windows and doors have been lost and there have been changes to the rear addition, particularly at the site of the present laundromat. Solar panels have recently been added to the roof but are not visible from the ground level. Over time, sections of this early 20th century addition were removed, creating the building footprint that we see today.”*

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that there are several images, including ones of the laundromat. Again, she invites everyone to review the notes on integrity and significance. The consultant recommendation that this be considered a Contributing resource.

Ms. Zerba made a motion to consider this a Contributing resource. Ms. Powell seconded the motion.

492 Ms. Powell stated that to her this feels a lot like the roundhouse property because of the addition
493 on the back and the more modern element, the front building, does not quite seem to fit as
494 Primary. The full property feels more like a Contributing resource.

495

496 The motion passed unanimously.

497

498 **7. 43 Wilson Street – Gates House- Built 1890**

499

500 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this property, built in 1890, is in current use as multiple
501 dwelling. She continued that regarding alterations, *“Single-family dwelling subdivided to create*
502 *duplex, porch railings and windows replaced in the late 20th century.”* This is a very common
503 phenomenon for the Keene area. The notes state, *“The former Gates House retains character-*
504 *defining historic features such as general form and massing, historic slate roof, historic wooden*
505 *clapboard siding, fenestration locations, historic brick chimney, turned porch columns, and*
506 *plug-split granite posts at the corners of the lot. All of these features are fairly typical of the*
507 *middle class suburban home of the late 19th century.”* Again, she invites people to review the
508 notes on significance and integrity. The consultant recommends this be a Contributing resource.

509

510 Ms. Zerba stated that she will support the recommendation for it to be a Contributing resource.
511 She continued that it does not look very good now, but with a little work it could be restored
512 beautifully to reflect a home that housed the people who worked in the manufacturing plants
513 around the corner.

514

515 Ms. Zerba made a motion to consider 43 Wilson St. a Contributing resource. Ms. Powell
516 seconded the motion.

517

518 Mr. Fleming asked if the reason this was not in a previous categorization is because it is part of
519 the area that was added to the historic district. Mr. Clements replied yes, that is correct.

520

521 The motion passed unanimously.

522

523 Mr. Clements stated that he would like to acknowledge that in exercises like this, it can be
524 difficult in the beginning to get your mind around the exercise, and then by the end of it, you
525 have a greater understanding of the exercise and what you are talking about. He continued that
526 he wants to check and ask if everyone is comfortable with all the decisions they made today, or if
527 anyone wants to go back and re-evaluate any previous decision now that they have a fuller
528 understanding of the process.

529

530 Ms. Carey stated that regarding the Wilson St. property, she wanted to note that through her
531 research, she has found that this house has a lot of history. She continued that particular people
532 have lived here that were historically significant, and it is a cultural landmark for the time and
533 throughout the history of Keene. If this house were in better condition, perhaps it would be
534 Primary. She would want that to be the case.

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Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked, regarding Mr. Clements’s point, if everyone was comfortable with the decisions they made today. Hearing no objection, she moved to the next agenda item.

3) Annual Report to City Council
A) A brief discussion on the City Council’s request that Boards and Commissions provide annual reports of their activities

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if everyone has a copy of the January 16 meeting notes. Mr. Clements replied that everyone should have received a copy of this memorandum, which was a City Council agenda item. He continued that Councilor Ed Haas requested that each City board, commission, or committee provide some sort of annual report for the City Council. It is voluntary process; the decision is up to each board whether they want to present to the full City Council or a Council subcommittee, in person or in writing. They do not need to decide tonight, as this is a joint committee of two groups and each group needs to decide individually. He just wanted to put it on their radar.

Brief discussion ensued. Mr. Fleming questioned why the memo says the Council wants the reports all on July 1 but also wants them staggered throughout the year. Mr. Clements clarified that Councilor Haas was envisioning staggered presentations so it was not just one Council meeting swamped with all the presentations at once.

Per Ms. Powell’s request, Ms. Zerba spoke a bit about what the system was like when committee/board chairs gave annual updates to the Council several years ago. Discussion continued about how this used to be a common practice that went by the wayside during COVID times and is now being revived. Mr. Clements stated that this will be an agenda item at the next HC meeting and the next HDC meeting for the groups to talk about.

4) Staff Updates
A) Master Plan Update

Mr. Clements stated that the City is undergoing a Comprehensive Master Plan update, and the process continues. He continued that they are now in the final stretch. Another survey is coming out soon and he encourages everyone to participate, probably in mid-April. He encourages everyone to keep an eye on keenemasterplan.com and the City’s website and social media. This (survey) will be looking at the goals and strategies coming out of the Master Plan Steering Committee and the task force groups they have been working with. They hope to see a draft of the actual document in early June. Also in early June, there will be another future summit, another opportunity for engagement. That will be an unveiling of the draft document.

Ms. Fortson added that the future summit is June 3, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at Heberton Hall. She continued that the future land use map is coming up as well, and the discussion boards are still active on keenemasterplan.com. She encourages people to participate in those discussion boards

578 and the survey, and to spread the word about the survey. Mr. Clements added that even people
579 who are not Keene residents but use the city are invited to give feedback. The discussion boards
580 will be up probably through April. He gave more information about the future land use map as
581 required by statute, and what they are looking for feedback on.

582

583 **5) New Business**

584

585 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if anyone had any new business. (No).

586

587 **6) Adjourn**

588

589 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:51 PM.

590

591 Respectfully submitted by,
592 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

593

594 Reviewed and edited by,
595 Evan J. Clements, AICP
596 Planner