

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

4:30 PM

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

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planner
Asah Cramer, Audio/Video Production
Specialist

Members Not Present:

Louise Zerba

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Ellis called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- A) February 12, 2025 – Regular Meeting**
- B) March 19, 2025 – Joint Historic District and Heritage Commission Meeting**

Ms. Emineth made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 12, 2025. Ms. Powell seconded the motion.

Ms. Huston arrived at 4:33 PM.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Powell made a motion to approve the March 19, 2025 minutes. Ms. Huston seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) **Discussion – Projects and Goalsetting for 2025**

Mr. Clements stated that at the last meeting, the HC talked about doing some kind of video content, so he asked Asah Cramer to come today. He continued that she can talk with them about doing longform and shortform video content and what that would be like.

Asah Cramer, Audio/Video Production Specialist, introduced herself. She stated that she understands that the HC is interested in doing some video content to promote what the HC is trying to celebrate. Through discussions with Mr. Clements and Ms. Fortson, she gets the sense that the HC knows about the resources at the library through Fact TV. Fact TV loans cameras and audio equipment and trains people how to use them, if people create content Fact TV can play on their channel. They have a large viewership. They also train people in editing. She highly recommends relying on those resources.

Ms. Cramer continued that her background is in longform public access/network TV. People nowadays have short attention spans, and short form/social media videos tend to do well. Videos 3 to 15 seconds long can be powerful to engage people and get them interested in ideas, so they are then more likely to look at the longer, more in-depth content. She is curious to hear about the HC's ideas.

Ms. Carey stated that she has gone twice to check out the equipment and resources at Fact TV. She spoke of how the equipment includes an iPhone, hand-held video recorder with a microphone, and earphones to wear while recording, which necessitates having two people. The equipment is available to the HC at any time, and Fact TV said they would do the editing, provided the HC stays within a scope and can create a 15-minute segment. She was thinking of doing a 15-minute video of her own house just as an example for the HC, to see how easy or not the process is. Ms. Cramer stated that she thinks that is a great idea. She continued that iPhone quality has surpassed that of many digital cameras.

Ms. Powell asked if there are legal restrictions in terms of representing the City and the content the HC would create. She asked if they would need it reviewed by the City Attorney. Ms. Powell asked if they would need to have the content approved to have the HC's name on this to air on the local TV station. Ms. Cramer replied that she does not know, off the top of her head. Mr. Clements replied that generally speaking, there are allowances for not-for-profit content shot only from the public right-of-way, and you can use about 15 seconds of copyrighted audio, such as music in the background, without having a license for it. He continued that for events and filming indoors, people who would be easily identifiable in footage would need to sign waivers. It is good practice to engage with property owners to make sure they are comfortable with the exterior of their property being filmed, regardless of legality. For specifics beyond that, they would need to research the requirements.

Ms. Powell asked if the municipality counts as a non-profit. Mr. Clements replied that he thinks so, but they would want to know for sure before getting started with this. Ms. Cramer stated that

the parameters are softer for video that is educational, which is what this sounds like. She continued that regarding background music, there are free music resource libraries, which she can help the HC with.

Ms. Powell stated that it might be beneficial to make a teaser up to 15 seconds long that correlates with longer-form content. She asked if Fact TV will have the exclusive rights to the content. Ms. Carey replied no, the HC can use it anywhere.

Chair Ellis asked if Fact TV really said they would edit the footage the HC gives them. Ms. Carey replied yes. Discussion ensued about how that is tremendously helpful. Ms. Carey shared her thoughts for the video content, showing and talking about the history of various local houses, buildings, and locations, and using a GoPro to film areas that are inaccessible to people in wheelchairs. She continued that the idea is to create a snapshot of what Keene looks like in 2025. Discussion ensued. Ms. Cramer stated that these are great ideas, and she agrees with using short teasers to direct people to the longer content.

Ms. Zerba asked what Ms. Cramer sees as stumbling blocks to this plan. Ms. Cramer replied that time is hard, but it sounds like the HC has done their homework on this. She continued that Fact TV's willingness to edit is great and saves a huge chunk of time. It sounds like the HC members have ideas around the history and stories to tell at each location. She continued that they might occasionally run into people who do not want their homes filmed, but that is just part of it. Discussion continued.

Chair Ellis asked if there are ideas Ms. Cramer sees get a lot of engagement on social media that she thinks would work well for the HC. Ms. Cramer replied that people like to see people's faces. She continued that it works to have someone who is telling a story, and someone who seems genuine and authentic. People respond better to content that has a human story, instead of just the exteriors of buildings. Discussion ensued about how to include people and their stories, and all the interesting history in downtown Keene, and about people that HC members know who might be able to help with this project.

Ms. Powell stated that figuring out the stories is important, because the buildings themselves are not the history. She continued that using archival imagery would be great, as people love "then and now" photos. It is important for the HC to think about and understand what specifically they are trying to communicate. She suggests starting with a spreadsheet or list of what they want to pursue and what the story is for each. Stories are first, and the legalities can be worked out behind the scenes. She likes Ms. Carey's idea of making a test case video. Again, they will need to know if there are restrictions on what they say, as members of a commission representing the City, and whether or to what degree the content needs to be scripted and approved.

Discussion continued about ideas for video content, and HC members agreed that using humor and levity when possible will make the videos more engaging. Ms. Emineth spoke about how to show people who think that history is just old and irrelevant that people in the past went through

the same things people today go through, and to find and show that human connection. Ms. Powell suggested they create, in advance of the downtown infrastructure project, a series of short videos of people talking about the changes downtown has experienced over the years and their thoughts on the changes and what it was like to live through them.

Mr. Clements stated that it sounds like homework for next time is coming up with some concrete ideas. He continued that he loves the downtown one, which is probably the one with the most chronological time constraint, so they might need to decide if that is something they want to push towards.

4) Historic Trail Marker – Keene Glass

Mr. Clements stated that guest Steve Seraichick is here to share a great project he is working on.

Mr. Seraichick introduced himself and gave a brief background about his family's history in Keene. He stated that his house is next door to Stonewall Farm. He was the past president of the Yankee Bottle Club. They collect and revere bottles manufactured in the 1700s and 1800s. Bottles were made right here in Keene, on Marlboro St. While walking his dog on the rail trail, he saw that there are historical markers on the stretch between Water St. and Eastern Ave., and what they are missing is a mention of Keene Glassworks. In 1830, Keene Glassworks employed one out of every six workers in Keene. There were two glass factories in Keene. One was near the Rec Center, and there is a sign saying it made window glass. About the same time, a glass factory was built on Marlboro St. to make glass bottles. He cannot believe the historical markers do not mention glass manufacturing. Bottle collecting is either the fifth or sixth most collectible of the top ten antiques, and collectors and novices who are interested in bottles highly revere the bottles manufactured in Keene. They are highly collectible and are not being made anymore.

Mr. Seraichick continued that he wanted to know what to do (to get a historical marker to include glass manufacturing), so he contacted Councilor Bobby Williams. Councilor Williams contacted people in Concord and told him (Mr. Seraichick) about how to apply for a historical sign for a road in NH. It is a complicated and lengthy process and a committee has to approve of your nomination. He got in touch with Amy Dixon, who oversees the historical markers in the state, and she told him the historical markers he is referring to were put up by the City of Keene, not the State. She told him to contact the municipality. Thus, he contacted someone, perhaps Mr. Clements, and spoke for a few minutes to the Historic District Commission. They told him to go to the Heritage Commission. Here he is today. Someone suggested he talk with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC), too, which he did. They were very interested in his idea of having a sign to recognize the glass industry in Keene.

Mr. Seraichick continued that Alan Rumrill (former Director of the Cheshire County Historical Society) is in the Yankee Bottle Club, too, knows what he (Mr. Seraichick) is up to, and is willing to put together a script for the sign. If he heard right, he thinks a City Council member was there (at the BPPAC meeting) and said that if Mr. Seraichick comes up with the sign script,

the Council will take it from there. Thus, Mr. Rumrill is working on it. They hope to have the sign.

HC members asked for more information about the location of the former glass bottle factory. Mr. Seraichick replied with more details and the history of the factory and the history of the railroads. He showed and spoke about two glass bottles he brought with him today, stating that they are each about \$1,000 right now at auction. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Powell stated that it sounds like Mr. Seraichick has the HC's support. She asked what he needs from them. Mr. Seraichick replied just their blessings. Chair Ellis asked if he needs something like a letter of support. Mr. Seraichick replied that when Mr. Rumrill drafts wordage for the sign, he will share it with the HC. Chair Ellis replied that that sounds great.

Ms. Powell stated that maybe Ms. Cramer is already imagining social media coverage, but maybe if this comes to fruition and the HC supports it, there could be an interview with Mr. Seraichick or other members of the Yankee Bottle Club, at the sign, for the HC's video series. Mr. Seraichick replied that the Yankee Bottle Club just met with Fact TV and someone from Fact TV filmed each member presenting a bottle and talking about their history with bottle collecting. He shared more information.

Mr. Clements stated that when Mr. Seraichick is ready with a full proposal to bring to City Council, the HC can figure out a way to support his petition, such as a letter or a motion. Ms. Powell stated that they could potentially offer monetary support, if there is a hangup on that from City Council. Mr. Clements stated that a HC member coming and speaking might be good. Discussion continued and the HC thanked Mr. Seraichick for coming today.

5) Discussion with Mayor Kahn – United States Semiquincentennial Celebration in 2026

Mayor Kahn stated that he has been asked a number of times by folks about a 2026 July 4th celebration. He continued that he hopes they can work together to do something, and he does not think it will be as complicated as it sounds. He thinks naming a 20-person commission, maybe in Concord, is a necessity, because the State capital ought to do a centerpiece for the state. Here in Keene, he thinks they can do something significant. His first phone call was to the Historical Society to see what they might be doing, and they are indeed planning something, which they are keeping under wraps for now. Their next newsletter will have an article about what they are anticipating, which include some activities down Main St., highlighting historic places like the Wyman Tavern. They will do activities next year as well. They are a great partner.

The Mayor continued the HC would be a great partner, too, if they accept. He saw in the last meeting minutes that once they do Italian American neighborhood documentation they were looking to move on to other kinds of documentation. He does not know what other kinds of activities the HC would like to sponsor, but he would like to have the HC as a partner with the Historical Society and perhaps others. He was on the phone today with the Keene Sentinel,

which has a great repository of history for the city, and they will be thinking about what they could contribute to this. He is also inquiring with the Ken Burns Enterprises and the Colonial Theater. Another suggestion is a reading of the Declaration of Independence, by a dozen or so students or other community representatives.

Ms. Huston suggested having all the churches in town ring their bells at once at 4:00 PM. Brief discussion ensued about how the church bells could be part of the HC's video series. Ms. Powell stated that it sounds like the HC has to do some brainstorming.

Ms. Powell asked what a partnership would look like – is the Historical Society doing their own thing? The Mayor replied that they talked about a partnership, bringing different folks together, so they do not have duplication. Discussion continued about ideas and possible participants, such as the SAR and DAR, too. The Mayor agreed with Ms. Powell that it would be good for the HC to have a brainstorming session for their next meeting. Ms. Powell stated that she thinks it makes a lot of sense for them to work with the City on acknowledging the anniversary. Discussion ensued about the upcoming anniversary of Paul Revere's ride, and the American Revolution. Ms. Powell stated that maybe there could be a piece about people in Keene's personal family history related to the Revolution.

Ms. Powell left at 5:24 PM.

6) Staff Updates

Mr. Clements gave an update on the City's progress with updating the Comprehensive Master Plan, encouraging folks to get information from and engage with keenemasterplan.com. He continued that June 3 is a Future Summit at which the draft plan will be unveiled, and he encourages people to attend and spread the word about it. Ms. Fortson stated that they are trying to have childcare available at the Future Summit for people who need it, with activities for kids and adults. She continued that they will also have a table at Earthfest on April 26, from 12:00 to 4:00 PM at Railroad Square. City staff will be there representing the Community Development Department, largely the Master Plan. The Energy and Climate Committee and BPPAC will also have tables.

7) New Business

Chair Ellis asked if there was any new business. (No).

8) Next Meeting – May 14, 2025

Chair Ellis stated that they are definitely meeting next month. She continued that they have a lot to do.

9) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Ellis adjourned the meeting at 5:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

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