

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

4:30 PM

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

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planner

Members Not Present:

Marilyn Huston

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor (arrived at 5:15 PM)

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Ellis called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. Roll call was conducted. The HC welcomed prospective new member, Acacia Johnston.

2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2025

Ms. Zerba made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 9, 2025. Ms. Carey seconded the motion.

HC members made the following corrections to the April 9 minutes:

Line 18 – Change “Ms. Cauley” to “Ms. Powell.”
Line 57 – Change “Chair Ellis” to “Ms. Powell.”
Line 87 – Change “Ms. Huston” to “Ms. Zerba.”
Line 165 – Change “Chair Ellis” to “Ms. Powell.”

The motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended passed by unanimous vote.

3) Discussion – Projects and Goalsetting for 2025

Ms. Carey stated that she borrowed a smartphone with a camera from Fact TV and did a short clip. She continued that making content is not an easy process. She did two versions of almost everything, one with someone videoing her while she read content, one on her own, having

mostly memorized what to say. This is a rough cut, with things jumbled together. Many of the things she thought she filmed, she did not, and had to go back and re-do. She will show the HC the footage and they can learn from her (learning process).

Ms. Carey showed the footage. She and other HC members made comments about the different types of lenses, the lighting, the importance of learning by doing, keeping the camera steady, editing, filming at different times of day, and so on and so forth. Ms. Emineth praised the focus on the stained glass.

Ms. Powell spoke about the possibility of separating the narration from the visuals, to film without worrying about the sound, and then putting it together. She continued that there needs to be a story of some sort, and the story could be Ms. Carey and her home. Discussion ensued, and Ms. Carey stated that Fact TV wants them to do the sound with the video. Mr. Clements stated that it cuts down on production time if they are doing it all at once. Discussion continued about the sound.

Ms. Emineth stated that they are doing it house by house, but it also would be interesting, like Ms. Powell said, if there were a theme such as stairways, houses with interesting architecture, stained glass, or turrets. Discussion continued about different historical buildings and homes and the features in them. Ms. Powell complimented the beauty of Ms. Carey's home and how she has cared for it. The HC discussed ideas about focusing on both community spaces and personal homes.

Ms. Emineth stated that she loved how the presentation for the (Downtown Infrastructure Project) showed old pictures of Main St. and the green for comparison, and it is great to have the historical and current images like that. Discussion ensued about doing that for the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence (Semiquincentennial), and other ideas such as using cameras that project against buildings with photos of what Main St. used to look like.

Ms. Powell stated that there are two approaches – to script and narrate videos, cutting them together with visuals; or to do more “man on the street” style videos, asking people to share their memories, experiences, and thoughts, such as why they love the stained glass on the church. Maybe they could do a hybrid. Maybe they could have a spreadsheet with their ideas.

Ms. Fortson spoke about a show from about 20 years ago, If Walls Could Talk, where people told stories about the older properties they purchased and renovated. Discussion continued about telling stories through individual homeowners, community spaces, community centers, office spaces that used to be old homes, and homes that were previously zoned as stores or libraries, for example.

HC members noted that they all have ideas and things they want to focus on, and they need to somehow make a list and organize their ideas and plans. Ms. Carey stated that there is a lot of flexibility here. She continued that Fact TV is looking for 15-minute segments to air on TV, and there are many ways the HC could create 15-minute segments and plug them together. The footage she showed the HC today is about 15 minutes, and she estimates it took her a couple of

hours to film it and another couple of hours to pull the materials together. Going to Fact TV and getting trained in the equipment also takes a bit of time.

Discussion continued with content ideas. Mr. Clements stated that one of the ideas that was discussed was capturing the downtown as it is now, before the changes are made, which is something that has a deadline. Many things the HC is discussing are not going anywhere, but downtown is changing, so that might be worth prioritizing. He continued that the flowers are best in the next month or so. Discussion ensued about the weather. Ms. Emineth spoke about how it would be great to document the changes to Railroad Square and the historical bricks.

HC members asked again about the possibility of creating a spreadsheet to list and organize all their ideas, and whether/how they would be able to collaborate on a live document, given that they are a City committee and need to comply with open government rules. They are not sure they would be allowed to edit it on their own without going through the staff liaison. Mr. Clements replied that he will look into that. It might be that HC members send him the information they want in the spreadsheet and he enters it. Discussion continued with ideas of how they might be able to collaborate on the spreadsheet while complying with the Right to Know statute and not inadvertently creating a quorum and, such as making the spreadsheet public, only having two HC members edit it, or creating a publicly-accessible Gmail account for the HC the way another City committee has. Mr. Clements stated again that he and Ms. Fortson will look into it.

Ms. Carey asked if they are going to try to do something this month (with filming) on Central Square, and if so, who will do it. Discussion ensued. Ms. Carey stated that she can do it but would love to do it with someone else. Ms. Powell stated that they want to overdo the coverage, including many different things, like morning, night, protests, a parade, kids playing in the fountain, people dining, and all the different environments. In response to HC members' questions, Mr. Clements stated that shooting in public is fine, no permit is needed. If they were to interview people on the street, they would need those people to sign releases, but they do not need signed releases to film on the street in general, with people's faces in crowds. Ms. Powell spoke about how to focus the Central Square content, suggesting that a jumping off point could be first researching the historical photos of Central Square and then having their filming mirror those.

Mayor Kahn arrived at 5:15 PM.

Discussion continued about filming Central Square. Ms. Powell stated that if Ms. Carey is willing to film, (that is great), but she unfortunately cannot help this month due to work. She continued that she could help in the second half of June. Ms. Carey replied that she will do what she can for now, filming Central Square at multiple times of day and capturing lots of different activities, without talking much. She continued that that footage can be edited down to whatever the HC wants it to be.

Ms. Powell stated that maybe they should buy media storage, like a hard drive. Mr. Clements replied that he will look into that.

Mr. Clements stated that it would be great if Ms. Carey went out and started shooting, as she said, and the more content the better. He continued that the homework for everyone to do for the June meeting could be to think about the downtown and about what they think should be covered. They could come up with concrete ideas in June and then do more shooting throughout the month of June. They could reconvene in July and see if they need more.

Ms. Emineth asked what the HC's deadline is for having all of this done. Discussion ensued about how this is an ongoing, rolling project.

Mayor Kahn stated that he saw some photos the Public Works Department has from 1973, which was the last time anyone dug beneath the surfaces (on Main St.). He continued that it is stunning. Discussion ensued about how people would be interested to see what is underground, and how great it would be if the HC could be allowed to get some footage of that. Mr. Clements stated that he wrote down "Past, present, future" – it would be great to have footage from the 1970s, and now, and the finished product in the future. HC members talked about trying for footage during construction, if a City employee with insurance to be in the construction zone can help them with that. Mayor Kahn suggested they invite Don (Lussier, Public Works Director) to have a conversation about it. Discussion continued.

Ms. Carey stated that she likes Mr. Clements's idea of focusing on the downtown for the next meeting. She continued that they have so many things up in the air and need to nail down a direction to go in. Chair Ellis stated that she could help Ms. Carey with the filming, maybe during a school day.

Ms. Powell stated that as they have been talking today, she wrote a list of the HC's ideas: turrets, stained glass, individual homes, the downtown, churches, faith centers, and parks. Other HC members added: athletic fields, the bike path, rail trails, the river, the dam, different seasons, and interviews with people. Ms. Carey stated that Fact TV would very much like this to be a series they could run for, say, a year. Discussion continued about another idea, involving (Steve Seraichick), who spoke with the HC last month about Keene's glass manufacturing history.

Ms. Powell stated that they have so many good ideas, and the task at hand, from her perspective, is for them to figure out how to organize, and set up a process for each project that can then apply to every project. She continued that unfortunately, a lot of the work for this kind of project is organizational and administrative work. For example, making sure files are named correctly so that you can find them later; keeping track of when things were filmed; and making sure any releases the HC does are documented and submitted appropriately and filed with the project correctly. Discussion ensued about what the HC does and what Fact TV does. Ms. Carey stated that if Fact TV airs something from the HC, Fact TV will have their data, but they will give it back to the HC. In response to HC members' questions, Ms. Carey clarified that Fact TV might edit the HC's videos slightly, but not a lot.

4) Staff Updates

Mr. Clements stated that everyone should have received, via email, a prioritization survey for the Master Plan Update, related to the goals and strategies for certain pillars that are most applicable

to the work of the HC. He continued that the surveys are due Friday. June 3rd is the Future Summit, which will be the big reveal, with a presentation and interactive activities. There will be childcare available, thanks to Ms. Fortson organizing that, and they really encourage parents of young children to attend and utilize this childcare so they (City staff) can point to the success of it and more regularly offer childcare at City events. Ms. Fortson stated that the childcare is through partnering with the Cheshire Children's Museum, which will be great for the kids and parents.

5) New Business

Chair Ellis stated that Mayor Kahn had said that the Colonial Theater is available/reserved for the HC for next year's July 4 for the United States Semiquincentennial. She continued that that is something for HC members to keep in mind. Mr. Clements stated that they were casually talking about that before the meeting started, about keeping that in the back of their mind, and also keeping up with it so they make sure the HC is involved. Chair Ellis asked if they will formalize a partnership with the Historical Society and if they should have HC members try to join those meetings. Mr. Clements replied that yes, that is the question they need to figure out. Discussion ensued. Chair Ellis stated that she will send an email to the Historical Center. Mr. Clements replied that she can CC: him or Ms. Fortson on that email.

6) Next Meeting – June 11, 2025

7) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Ellis adjourned the meeting at 5:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Evan J. Clements, AICP
Planner / Deputy Zoning Administrator