

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026**

**4:30 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Cauley Powell, Chair  
Rose Carey  
Marilyn Huston (arrived at 4:38 PM)  
Councilor Molly Ellis  
Louise Zerba  
Connie Joyce, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Megan A. Fortson, AICP - Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Jill Bouchillon, Alternate  
Acacia Royce, Vice Chair  
Julie Emineth  
Kathy Halverson, Alternate

**1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM. Roll call was conducted. Chair Powell stated that Connie Joyce is a voting member today.

**2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2026**

Ms. Zerba made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2026. Councilor Ellis seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Joint Heritage Commission and Historic District Commission Meeting –  
Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 4:30 PM in Council Chambers**

Chair Powell stated that the joint meeting with the Historic District Commission (HDC) will be at the HC's normal meeting time in May. She continued that it will be an opportunity to talk about collaboration. They heard a bit about how the HDC has been collaborating with the Keene State College architecture class, so they can hear about how that continues to develop and share about all of the things the HC has been working on. She encourages HC members to brainstorm what they might want to be representing at that meeting. She expects it will be productive and positive to connect with their fellow committee members.

Chair Powell asked if Ms. Fortson had anything to add. Ms. Fortson replied that the meeting will be in Council Chambers, a larger space to accommodate the larger group.

#### **4) Downtown Video Project Updates**

Chair Powell asked if anyone had any updates to share. Ms. Zerba stated that she sent her 45-45 Central Square information to Ms. Fortson, who said she was going to put it in the Google Drive. Ms. Fortson replied yes, it is now in the Google Drive. Ms. Zerba stated that there is more information she needs to get from the city directory, so she will add that to her list.

Chair Powell spoke of the work she has been doing with a spreadsheet, and how she will get the new spreadsheet in, hopefully with links so people can see the write-ups that correlate with each property, and they will have a better overview of what is missing or needs to be attended to. She continued that she thinks that it will mostly be the properties below Central Square.

Ms. Zerba stated that there are so many pieces to this project, and it would be nice to somehow label, number, or categorize them for the sake of clarity. Chair Powell replied that Ms. Carey, too, had talked with her about how things were a little unclear. She continued that she thus made a write-up about what she thinks they are doing with the project.

Marilyn Huston arrived at 4:38 PM.

Per Chair Powell's request, Ms. Fortson displayed the Google Drive on the screen so the group could see what Chair Powell wrote to clarify the downtown project elements: Narrative History, Photographs and Film, and Oral History. Discussion continued as HC members gave updates on the write-ups they have done and have been working on. Ms. Carey spoke about how she has pretty much finished write-ups for the east side of Main St – the Cheshire House, Kresge Block, Woolworths; that takes them down to the railroad tracks. She wants to do a write-up about the railroad. She has not started on the west side of Main St. She is not sure if the Latchis Theater Block was assigned to someone, but she thinks someone is covering the bank block.

Discussion continued about the blocks and which ones still need people assigned to them, and what assignments people already have. Chair Powell asked Ms. Fortson to re-send the Google Drive link to the group in case anyone needs it again. HC members clarified their assignments. Chair Powell stated that she thinks all of Central Square has been assigned, although not everything is in yet. Ms. Zerba stated that they need more pictures. Others agreed, and discussion continued about how even temporary/cell phone photos for now would be good.

Ms. Carey asked if they should include the clock on the west side of Main St. She gave some information about the clock's history, and discussion continued. HC members spoke in favor of including it as a second priority after the buildings.

Chair Powell returned the group's attention to the project overview and asked if others agree that what she wrote is aligned with what they are doing. She continued that they are working on collecting/writing these narrative histories, then doing these film components that are documenting the historic and the current, and then there is this secondary oral history project

with the videos, which Alina Nightingale was working on, that connects people's stories to the spaces. Those are the three "buckets" that they are generally feeding their work into right now. The projects that will be born of all that work include the social media content for the City, where the written components, photos, videos, and maybe some voiceover, can be sent out to 1) promote the HC and its work, and 2) promote the City's heritage, as is the HC's mission. They will update the HC's webpage and get all of this information onto it.

Then, there is the Monadnock 250 event, and the ongoing Fact TV project, which would involve Ms. Nightingale's work and other filmed content, and historic photos if they can get those cleared. The written components would essentially be a script to go with the filmed content and historic photos. Other projects are the plaques or signage that might be born of the interesting things that the HC develops. Right now, the project feels big and a little amorphous, because it is, but they are working towards several different goals. They are checking boxes right now, and once they have a bunch of material to review, the best ways to use it will be evident, or at least, they will have numerous opportunities to do interesting things with it.

Chair Powell asked if there were other thoughts on the downtown project. She continued that it seems like a lot, and it is, but she thinks they are in quite good shape. Timeline-wise, they are on track for being ready for Monadnock 250. They just need to continue to collect the written components and the photo components.

Chair Powell asked if April is when the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (DHR) will come. Ms. Fortson replied yes, someone from DHR will come to next month's HC meeting and do an information session about their Certified Local Government Grants, in case the HC decides to pursue that. She continued that she thinks they will be opening another round of grants towards the end of the summer. Ms. Zerba asked if the signage would qualify for such a grant. Ms. Fortson replied that she does not know; they will need to get more information from the person from the DHR.

Chair Powell stated that she is not sure if the HC should ask Asah Cramer to attend a meeting to talk with them about social media, or if they should do that offline sometime. Ms. Fortson replied that Ms. Cramer did attend before and have a discussion, so maybe when the HC has something a little more definitive – such as once the Monadnock 250 radio spots have been recorded – Ms. Cramer could do something similar for the City's social media with the photos. She continued that it would make more sense to bring Ms. Cramer in when the HC has something for her. Chair Powell suggested that at the next HC meeting, they think about it and pitch some concepts for that use. Ms. Fortson stated that the HC is creating the content, and it sounds like Alan Rumrill is going to do the recordings of it. She asked if that is correct. Discussion ensued about how that is an idea, but no one has talked with him about it yet, and the director of the Monadnock Media Group might want the radio hosts to read the content. They need clarity what the radio station wants before talking with Mr. Rumrill.

Ms. Carey stated that as an update on the work with Ms. Nightingale, she and Ms. Nightingale have both been ill recently, so nothing has gone forward. Chair Powell asked if there is anything regarding Ms. Nightingale's project that the HC can weigh in on. Ms. Carey replied that her concern is that she herself has a lot on her plate right now and could use support from other HC

members to help her work with Ms. Nightingale. Discussion ensued. Ms. Carey spoke about how Ms. Nightingale is a joy to work with, does the work well and stays on target. They need to get more interviews scheduled for Ms. Nightingale and help her develop interview questions. Ms. Nightingale would benefit from interviewing a few people in a more casual way first, to gain more experience and comfort with interviews. She is in a mentoring role with Ms. Nightingale, as is Fact TV, and that is how the school describes it – it is like Ms. Nightingale has been hired for this job and she is getting school credit from learning how to do these kinds of interviews and filming and editing work. Discussion ensued about how the HC can support Ms. Carey and Ms. Nightingale. Noting that working with Ms. Nightingale will mostly be during school hours, which is not possible for some HC members, Chair Powell suggested they have some offline, one-on-one conversations to figure this out. She continued that hopefully Ms. Nightingale will be able to come to the next meeting, too. Discussion continued about how well Ms. Nightingale is doing and how much the HC appreciates her contributions.

Councilor Ellis stated that something she wanted to bring up, which relates both to this conversation and the next agenda item, is that she talked with the Colonial Theater about their involvement in Monadnock 250, and the Colonial would be happy to show any shorts the HC has ready to go. She continued that, however, they have a plan that would not require any shorts, so it is fine if the HC wants to slow down with the filming and continue the work at whatever Ms. Nightingale's pace is. The HC does not need to rush its video project; they can continue working on the write-ups. It would be good to build that body of content and then do the videos afterward. Ms. Carey replied that some of the video work has already happened. She continued that she is delighted to hear that the Colonial will accept shorts. That is encouraging to the project overall. Councilor Ellis replied that she just did not want the HC to feel any pressure. Ms. Carey replied that she thinks it actually gives good structure to what Ms. Nightingale is doing.

Councilor Ellis asked if Ms. Carey has a sense of what Ms. Nightingale's final video project goal is. Ms. Carey replied that she is not completely sure, but originally, it was to do the shorts and to develop at least one or two half-hour programs that could be aired on Fact TV – specifically, interviews. Discussion continued. Ms. Carey spoke about how Ms. Nightingale's interview of Ms. Zerba was a great idea, and good practice for Ms. Nightingale, but noted that she did not have enough material, and thus the interview will need to be redone or expanded/edited.

Chair Powell asked if the HC needs to somehow “sign off on” Ms. Nightingale's work or give her feedback somehow, or if that is not necessary because it is Ms. Nightingale's own project. Ms. Carey replied that she thinks the project is encapsulated within the HC's work, but she does not think they need to sign off on it. She continued that the interviews are with people who are talking about their own lives and what they remember about Keene, so it is not as if Ms. Nightingale is doing research that needs to be checked for accuracy. Councilor Ellis stated that maybe the HC or Ms. Carey could write a letter of commendation for Ms. Nightingale at the end of her project, saying how helpful Ms. Nightingale's work is and how she is a joy to work with. Ms. Carey replied that she does say that, because she meets with school staff at certain intervals to check in about the status of the project. Discussion continued about how the HC can submit something at the end of Ms. Nightingale's work to express their appreciation.

**5) US Sesqui-Centennial 2026 Planning & Preparation Updates**

Councilor Ellis stated that the Colonial Theater will show a movie, which will probably be “An American Tail,” an animated movie about a family of mice who immigrate from Russia to the US, which is very thematic, and family friendly. Discussion ensued about the film.

Councilor Ellis stated that the Monadnock 250 group pitched the idea of a kids’ bike parade, with a bike-decorating contest. After the parade, there will be a street festival, including a reading of the Declaration of Independence. A lot of things are in the works. This will all be taking place on July 4, 2026. A bus will shuttle people around as needed. Discussion ensued about the potential shuttle bus route.

Councilor Ellis continued that the Monadnock Media Group, which owns My Keene Now and several radio stations, would like to do short ads/sponsorship opportunities for sponsors of Monadnock 250. The group has been using Ms. Carey’s beautiful write-ups. Each write-up will be used to create a 50-second recording, similar to Alan Rumrill’s “Monadnock Moments,” and the last few seconds will be a “Brought to you by…” announcement. She will email the director and ask if they want the radio hosts to be reading those, or if the Monadnock 250 group should find someone. Ms. Zerba asked who would be responsible for obtaining the sponsorships. Councilor Ellis replied Mayor Kahn.

Chair Powell stated that the HC had discussed the possibility of their work having some crossover with Monadnock 250, and the building write-ups are maybe not the right fit, but Ms. Carey has stepped up with write-ups that could be used. Those are on the Google Drive if anyone wants to take a look or draft one. Councilor Ellis continued that she thinks there is a lot of overlap between what they have already been doing with their building writeups and what they are writing for the Monadnock 250 event. She just recast hers a little and made it a little more anecdotal about people rather than the building itself. If someone is already doing a building write-up, they might be able to just change a few lines and make it fit. Ms. Carey stated that they need 20 writeups and they currently have 18. Discussion continued. Councilor Ellis stated that she has written 2, and Ms. Carey has written the other 16, which she is very grateful for. Ms. Carey replied that she has one more in mind, too, so she does not think they need to ask other people to do it. She continued that they are more based around the July 4<sup>th</sup> theme, involving the Revolutionary War and some history of early Keene and the Native peoples who lived here. She also included the railroads a little bit.

Chair Powell stated that as they are thinking about social media and what the HC can post – and they can check and see what Ms. Cramer thinks – utilizing these makes a lot of sense. They would be a good fit for something like an Instagram post, either as text and photos, or as recorded audio. There are multiple purposes and multiple uses of this work, as long as the radio does not have the ownership of it. Ms. Fortson replied that that is what she was trying to get at before – the question of whether the radio station owns the content once it airs. Councilor Ellis replied that she thinks that the text would still belong to the HC. She will double check to make sure the HC will retain the right to use the content. Discussion continued. Ms. Fortson spoke of how she can envision Ms. Cramer using the HC’s content on social media.

Chair Powell stated that something she just thought of, which is not the HC's responsibility to solve, is the need to make sure that there is formal photography being done at the Monadnock 250 festival to enter into the historical record, as this is a moment in Keene's history. Obviously, the Keene Sentinel will be at the Monadnock 250 festival and will document it. Discussion ensued about the importance of this, and the possibility of the HC considering hiring a photographer to shoot a bit, maybe a drone photographer, too. HC members spoke positively about having someone document this so there is an HC-sponsored collection of photos, as a special way to commemorate the event.

Chair Powell thanked Councilor Ellis for all of the impressive work she and the Monadnock 250 group are doing. She continued that they are lucky to have her. Councilor Ellis thanked her and also expressed appreciation for all of the hard work Ms. Carey has been doing.

**6) Staff Updates**

Chair Powell asked Ms. Fortson if she had any updates. Ms. Fortson replied that there are no updates today.

**7) New Business**

Chair Powell asked if anyone had any new business. (No).

**8) Next Meeting – April 8, 2026**

**9) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Megan A. Fortson, AICP - Planner