

Exeter Heritage Commission
Approved as Amended, September 1, 2010
Wheelwright Room, Exeter Town Offices
July 14, 2010

Call Meeting to Order

Members Present: John Merkle, Peter Smith, Don Clement, Mary Dupré, Ron Schutz,
Guest: Pam Gjetum of the Historic District Commission.
Absent: Amy Bailey, Peter Michaud.

Chairman, John Merkle, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Approval of the minutes of the April, May, and June meetings postponed to August.

1. Possible Expansion of the High Street Historic District to Include a Portion of Portsmouth Avenue

This idea came forth from the earlier discussion and study of the possible demolition of a residence at 8 Portsmouth Avenue. It was agreed that in spite of commercialization, historic structures still remain. The Portsmouth Avenue approach to Exeter in itself is historic and was one of the earliest approaches to the town and that aspect should be reinforced and preserved. Becoming part of a Historic District would not change the zoning on that part of the Avenue but would place a historic overlay over the present C2 zone. Critical to this decision would be the first step of defining the boundaries from High Street to an end site on both sides of the Avenue. Then the usual public steps in the process would begin.

2. Certified Local Government Grants

The grant for a Town-wide Mapping survey has been approved so that the Commission can now advertise for bids from approved consulting firms.

The Letter of Intent for Survey and Planning of the Winter Street Cemetery has been approved and the application for this grant has been forwarded to the Heritage Commission for review. Ron Schutz will follow up on this project and complete and submit the grant application for the Preservation Consultant.

A discussion of other cemeteries in town ensued and was concluded with the thought that cemeteries should be an important aspect of the Heritage Commission's agenda. The discussion will continue with plans for a town cemetery tour by the Commission.

3. Fogg-Rollins House Wheelwright Shop Relocation

Peter Smith indicated that the legalities of family wills and covenants involved with use of this property contribute to many problems. The intent of the heirs that the property should become a museum is one of the issues. Relating to the Wheelwright Shop, this is difficult because there is no way that the building could be accessible to the public as it now stands. It might be possible to carry out the intent of the will to exhibit the wheelwright tools and equipment at another facility with due credit given to the present location.

Sanborn Mills in Loudon, NH are interested in this possibility. A suggestion of the material going to the Exeter Historical Society received a negative reply because there is not enough room for a proper display or storage.

4. Discussion about having Heritage Commission Meetings at the Historical Society Building

Discussion centered on parking and that there is not handicap access. Comment was made by Don Clement that Town Manager, Russ Dean, approved of the possibility changing the meeting place. It was decided the subject would remain on the agenda to be discussed again at the next meeting, in August.

5. Update on Demolition Review Requests

Discussion centered on the problem of the five day time limit for review of and recommendations relative to the property being considered for demolition. This involves contacting the three sub-committee members and setting up a date acceptable for a meeting, carrying out the exterior inspection, discussion, and writing the recommendation. It was suggested that the five day requirement could be changed to "five business days."

John Merkle, Chairman, also suggested that it would be helpful when it is necessary to request a meeting with the owner of a property being considered for demolition, that the request come through the Code Officer, thus giving more weight to the request. It was agreed that the owner would be more likely to respond.

At the recommendation of member Don Clement, Chairman Merkle will write a letter of expectation for Code Officers relative to demolition review.

6. Properties at Risk

At this time, the Raynes-Farm Barn is in need of roof repair due to damage done in the February storm. Don Clement said that this will be the concentration for those involved until the repairs are made.

Peter Smith said that measuring the barn proved that there is more than enough room in it for the storage of early vehicles now at the Fogg-Rollins property.

7. Other Business

John Merkle will contact members of the Heritage Commission via e-mail to and ask their opinion on changing the meeting day from the second Wednesday of the month to either the first or third Wednesday.

Meeting was adjourned by majority decision at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary B. Dupré
Secretary pro tem