

Exeter Heritage Commission
Minutes Approved as Amended, February 9, 2011
Wheelwright Room, Exeter Town Offices
November 3, 2010

Call Meeting to Order

Members Present: John Merkle, Amy Bailey, Ron Schutz, Peter Michaud, Peter Smith and Mary Dupré

Absent: Don Clement

Chairman, John Merkle, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Wheelwright Room.

1. Approval of the minutes of recent meetings

After reviewing the minutes from the October meeting, the Board discussed the draft minutes as presented. Mary Dupré suggested changing the following statement: "*Don Clement volunteered to speak with Cliff Sinnott, Selectman's Representative of the Rockingham Planning Commission,*" to "*Don Clement volunteered to speak with Cliff Sinnott, Director of the Rockingham Planning Commission.*" Peter Michaud moved to approve the October 6, 2010 minutes as amended, Ron Schutz seconded: Vote unanimous.

2. Follow up on the George Leonard Smith cannon monument Eagle Scout project.

John Merkle explained that there are no new developments concerning the George Leonard Smith cannon monument Eagle Scout project. Peter Smith has yet to receive a response from the scout after contacting him.

3. Follow up discussion on the possible expansion of the High Street and Downtown Historic Districts to include a portion of Portsmouth Avenue.

John Merkle explained that he received an e-mail from Fred Kollmorgen, member of the HDC, concerning an amendment to the HDC Guidelines, specifically concerning demolition. The amended guidelines were rewritten as follows:

On page 8 under Demolition, in the first sentence, delete "HDC review" and insert "review by the Demolition Review Committee of the Heritage Commission and subsequently the HDC. The HDC should consider the findings of the Demolition Review Committee before deciding on a demolition application. Demolition review requirements are contained in Article 5, General Regulations, of the Exeter Zoning Ordinance. Demolition review is initiated by submission of an application for a building permit. Applicants wanting to demolish structures in the historic districts should review the zoning regulations so that they are aware of the actions and the time needed for them by the Code Enforcement Officer and Demolition Review Committee."

Ron Schutz, member of the HDC, explained that he provided input on the amendment in order to ensure a clear timeline for demolition reviews within the Historic District.

4. Status of the Certified Local Government grant for a town-wide mapping survey of historical and cultural resources.

Mary Dupré explained to the Board that the Certified Local Government grant was included in the Governor's Council Meeting along with 93 other items, but has yet to hear any follow-up.

5. Status of Winter Street Cemetery grant.

Mary Dupré announced that the Winter Street Cemetery grant should be finalized within the following week. The Board agreed to start organizing responsibilities for the various jobs before the grant is approved. Peter Michaud began a discussion about how to move forward with the grant and what the final product will be. The grant itself will require a state survey of the graveyard in order to determine design significance and eligibility for the national registry. The following criterion determines eligibility:

- A. An event or series of events, activities, or patterns of an area's development;*
- B. Association with the life of an important person;*
- C. A building form, style, engineering technique, or artistic value;*
- D. Information potential.*

Resource: New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources
http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/nr_eligibility.htm

The survey will not require each individual grave to be inspected, but rather the entire graveyard as a whole, utilizing all existing documentation available. Peter Michaud offered to be responsible for Project Planning, agreeing to outline the project, write a statement for qualifications, and present an example of an RFP for the next meeting. Ron Schutz agreed to finalize those points into an official RFP, as well as take care of the media releases. Other jobs include interaction with the local schools and volunteers, advertise for a consultant, and general project planning. Ms. Dupré stated that there will be a warrant article regarding cemetery trustees. This would create a \$30,000 cemetery trust fund, however not all maintenance would be covered. The Board discussed further points of the fund and how it would impact the Winter Street Cemetery grant.

At this point, Amy Bailey arrived at the meeting and was asked if anything definitive was discussed at the recent ZORC meeting regarding demolition review. Ms. Bailey explained that ZORC spoke at length about the issue, specifically how it got bypassed, the sequence of events, and how to prevent the problem in the future. There was no final decision to report. It was then suggested that perhaps professional development training may help to prevent these types of misunderstandings in the future. The Board felt that the Heritage Commission and the HDC should retain the same standards and collaborate in order to create a more cohesive design strategy. Peter Michaud suggested the use of online resources, such as the National Parks Services Preservation Briefs in order to create preservation guidelines.

6. Demolition request updates.

There were no demolition request updates to discuss.

7. Update and discussion concerning other properties at possible risk.

There were no new properties at risk to discuss. The Board discussed the Fogg-Rollins House and the plan to move the building to another location.

8. Discussion about meetings at the Exeter Historical Society.

John Merkle began a discussion about holding the Heritage Commission Meetings within the Historical Society Building. Mary Dupré pointed out that four out of eight Historical Society Meetings coincide with the same meeting dates as the Heritage Commission. Another issue involved the process of setting up, finding a space, and locking the building. Peter Michaud voiced a concern about how the public would perceive the Heritage Commission if they held their meetings in a building run by a nonprofit organization, and not the Town Offices. Meeting within the Exeter Town Offices reiterates that the Heritage Commission is a commission of the town, not a nonprofit organization. John Merkle pointed out that the Town Offices are wheelchair accessible and contain restrooms, making it far easier for public access. The Board agreed that it was a generous offer but decided it would be best to continue holding the meetings within the Town Offices.

9. Other Business.

There was no additional business to discuss.

Ron Schutz motioned to adjourn, Peter Michaud seconded: Vote unanimous.

Chairman John Merkle adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary