

Exeter Heritage Commission
Approved as Presented, August 8, 2011
Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices
June 8, 2011

Call Meeting to Order

Members Present: John Merkle, Mary Dupré, Peter Smith, Peter Michaud,
and Julie Gilman

Chairman, John Merkle, called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices.

1. Approval of the minutes of May 4, 2011.

The minutes were tabled to next month for approval.

2. Follow up discussion regarding Form-Based Codes as an option in lieu of expansion of the Historic District.

The Heritage Commission began a follow up discussion regarding the recent Form-Based Code presentation made by Jeffrey Hyland. Several members showed support for the option and would be interested in participating in a continued discussion with other Boards within the Town. Julie Gilman stated that Julie LaBranche from the Rockingham Planning Commission agreed to do a presentation for the Economic Development Committee. After discussing additional options in more detail, the Board agreed that the best route for the High Street intersection area would be to support Form-Based Code instead of expanding the Historic District. Ms. Gilman encouraged the Board to review other examples of Form-Based Code written for other towns for the next meeting. Julie Gilman made a motion that the Heritage Commission will pursue Form-based code implementation for the Town of Exeter, Peter Smith seconded: Vote unanimous. John Merkle volunteered to write a letter to the Code Enforcement Officer and the Planning Board expressing the Heritage Commission's interest in pursuing Form-based code.

3. Follow-up discussion on possible changes to the demolition review ordinance.

John Merkle began a conversation concerning much-needed timeline changes to the Demolition Review Ordinance. Currently, the Demolition Review Committee is required to do as follows, as written in Section 5.3.5.C of the Demolition Review Ordinance:

"2. Within five business days of its receipt of a copy of the application, the committee will issue a preliminary recommendation regarding the granting of a demolition permit.... Investigation and recommendation shall be completed within 30 calendar days of the committee's receipt of a copy of the application.

3. During the maximum 30 calendar-day-period, the committee shall meet with the property owner and conduct such public hearings and investigations as it may determine to be necessary in the formulation of its written recommendation regarding the granting of such permit."

The responsibilities of the Demolition Review Committee are outlined as follows, according to Section 5.3.5.D of the Demolition Review Ordinance:

"1. Make a decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the demolition application as to whether the building might be of historical or architectural significance.

2. Notify the Code Administrator in writing within two (2) business days of decision if the building is found to be not significant or is deemed to be historically significant. that if the building is not considered significant demolition may proceed....

6. Hold a meeting between the Demolition Review Committee and the applicant (or applicant's representative) within ten (10) business days of the public hearing to discuss alternatives to demolition if the committee determines the building is significant and its loss potentially detrimental to the community."

After discussing several options at length to allow for a more appropriate schedule, the Board agreed upon the following changes:

Section 5.3.5.C of the Demolition Review Ordinance:

"2. Within *seven* business days of its receipt of a copy of the application, the committee will issue a preliminary recommendation regarding the granting of a demolition permit.... Investigation and recommendation shall be completed within 30 *business* days of the committee's *determination of significance*.

3. During the maximum 30 *-business* day-period, the committee shall meet with the property owner and conduct such public hearings and investigations as it may determine to be necessary in the formulation of its written recommendation regarding the granting of such permit. "

Section 5.3.5.D of the Demolition Review Ordinance:

"1. Make a decision within *seven* (7) business days of receipt of the demolition application as to whether the building might be of historical or architectural significance.

2. Notify the Code Administrator in writing that if the building is not considered significant demolition may proceed....

6. Hold a meeting between the Demolition Review Committee and the applicant (or applicant's representative) within *the remaining thirty (30)* business days to discuss alternatives to demolition if the committee determines the building is significant and its loss potentially detrimental to the community."

These changes allow for a schedule that is more flexible and manageable for members of the Demolition Review Committee. It provides the appropriate amount of time for members to schedule a meeting, research the property, and contact the owner, as well as allow for a press release within the newsletter's timeline. During this discussion, Peter Michaud arrived at 7:50. Mr. Michaud made the suggestion to add language regarding

photo documentation of interiors through the use of a photo consent form. John Merkle agreed to make notes on all changes discussed and redistribute them. Both Julie Gilman and John Merkle agreed to take the changes to the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee.

4. Update on the status of the Certified Local Government grants for a town wide mapping survey and the survey for the Winter Street cemetery.

John Merkle stated that the letter of intent has been submitted for the Town Wide Mapping Survey.

5. Draft of request for proposals for Winter Street Cemetery survey.

Peter Michaud agreed to finalize the RFP for the Winter Street Cemetery survey in order to send out within the week. The RFP will be published through the local newsletter, mailed out to specific firms, and posted online.

6. Demolition request updates.

The Demolition Review Committee recently reviewed the Oak Street property and found the shed building not of significant cultural value to the town. Peter Michaud stated that this application was a good example of how the demolition process should work. The DRC made the recommendation to the owners to preserve the existing porch.

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

A discussion began concerning the auction of the Eventide Home property. Julie Gilman stated that there have been several interested parties looking to restore the property in a variety of ways. The auction will be held on June 24th.

Peter Michaud stated that the Vanasse, Hangen, Brustlin Inc. (VHB) has been contracted to complete the Great Dam Study. The study will consist of a full archeological survey and above ground survey to discover the impact of the river system if the dam is removed or changed in any way.

Peter Smith announced that the sale of the Fogg-Rollins property is on hold for the time being. Historic New England holds the easement and they still have yet to find an adequate buyer that will honor the intent of the trust.

8. Other Business.

There was no additional business to discuss.

Julie Gilman motioned to adjourn, Peter Michaud seconded: Vote unanimous.

Chairman John Merkle adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary