

Minutes Approved at March 14, 2012 meeting

Heritage Commission

Wheelwright Room

Exeter Town Office

February 08, 2012

Call Meeting to Order

Members present: *Peter Michaud, Mary Dupré, Planning Board rep. Kathy Corson, Selectman rep. Julie Gilman, and John Merkle, Chairman*

Chairman John Merkle called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm in the Wheelwright Room at the Exeter Town office

- **Approval of minutes**

Ms. Gilman moved to accept the draft minutes of the January 11, 2012 meeting as presented; seconded by Ms. Dupré. Vote: unanimous (Mr. Michaud was not present for the motion and vote.)

- **Update on Exeter River Dam Removal Study**

There was no report from the consultants at the January 19, 2012 River Study meeting on the historical components of the ongoing Dam Removal Study. It is anticipated there will be an update at the February meeting.

In a discussion of the current list of the three listed consulting parties, Mr. Michaud felt as the process moves forward there may be more involvement. As to coming in at a later time, Mr. Michaud explained you just need to apply to the Federal agency to say you wish to be a consulting party and you then become part of the process. At the present, the "consultation" has not begun; still in the information/fact finding phase of what are the cultural and archeological resources that may or may not be affected.

The downtown is listed to the National Register but at the time of application the forms did not provide the Dam be listed as a contributing or non-contributing resource; never addressed. They now have to file to determine if the Dam is individually eligible; does it have engineering values.

Mr. Merkle commented the study does merit following for at some point the Commission will be asked to do a public hearing from a cultural resources point of view and not from a river study's point of view.

- **Town Mapping Survey**

Ms. Gilman reported two proposals were received: The Preservation Company of Kensington, NH and Harvey Research and Consulting of Syracuse, NY. They are similar but presented differently; did feel the need for a scorecard to validate a selection decision.

Minutes Approved at March 14, 2012 meeting

Mr. Michaud suggested a subcommittee be formed and meet to read through the proposals with an evaluation sheet to do a comparable scoring. A matrix is needed to look at the deliverables to bring impartiality to a decision. The Board of Selectmen will be looking for a recommendation from this Commission before awarding a contract. Mr. Merkle, Ms. Gilman and Mr. Michaud expressed a willingness to serve on the subcommittee. Ms. Corson moved to approve the membership of the subcommittee; seconded by Ms. Dupré. Motion carried. A meeting date of Friday February 10, 2012 was set to meet and review the proposals.

- **Form Based Codes**

The document, *Portsmouth Avenue Corridor Improvement District*, prepared by Sylvia von Aulock, Town Planner and an excerpt from a Seabrook, NH Zoning Amendment on creating a new corridor management plan were received electronically by the members prior to the meeting. All found them to be most helpful and informative. Ms. Corson remarked Seabrook is also working on Form Based Codes and will be looking at them as a guide to their approach and plan of adoption for their Town. Whatever route is followed, adoption will be most likely be a year away. A more immediate goal is to have the ZORC subcommittee make a presentation to the BOS on the concept after more documentation is completed.

Because Portsmouth Avenue is the primary area of focus at this time, it is being encouraged Public Works become a member of the subcommittee to allow for interaction as they continue to develop their plans for upgrades to Portsmouth Avenue.

Mr. Michaud commented it (FBC) was a great way to bring regulation without so much oversight that it crushing.

- **Winter Street Cemetery**

It was confirmed a vote was taken to pursue the nomination of the Cemetery to the National Register but Ms. Gilman was unsure of the appropriate contact and it has not been made. Mr. Michaud stated he was the contact person and gave a brief outline of the criteria for cemeteries to be eligible for the National Register. Further discussion determined to proceed with a nomination to the State Register and can always go back and apply to the National Register.

Ms. Gilman did agree to contact the NH DHR representative and request the letter be forwarded to the Town for signing to start the process for listing in the State Register.

- **Demolition request review**

No requests were received this month. As for the Getty Station on Bow St./Court St., Ms. Gilman had no further update other than the contact at the National Association of Auto Museums agreed to put out the information to their members.

- **Discussion of other properties at risk**

Minutes Approved at March 14, 2012 meeting

Mr. Michaud provided an update on the Conner Farm located on the old Rt. 101 that is owned by NH Fish and Game. The land and house have a preservation easement held by DHR. The House has not been maintained over the years and is almost in the "at risk" category. However, after several years in negotiation, DHR and Fish and Game have agreed to subdivide the house with 5 acres of land to be sold to a private investor. The remaining land would be retained by Fish and Game with an easement protecting its cultural values and the deed to the house would contain a preservation easement. A descendent of the Conner family has expressed in interest in acquiring the property and has made an offer as such. It is not finalized but making its way through the necessary channels. Mr. Michaud was very pleased with the possibility of its potential to serve as a model for other similar properties that exist out there; land will be kept for recreational purposes and someone willing to take on the care and maintenance of a historic house.

Mr. Merkle felt there was some interest in the Fogg-Rollins house on the Hampton Rd.

- **Other business**

An upcoming workshop on March 7, 2012 in Concord that is mandatory for agencies/commissions wishing to apply for a Certified Local Government grant (CLG) from the NH Division of Historical Resources. The workshop is in preparation for the next cycle the grant round and will address what are the expectations, how projects move forward; an attempt to get communities on the same page. Several members expressed in interest in attending.

Mr. Michaud stated Moose Plate money is now available for work being done on any municipally owned building that is listed or eligible for State or National Register. The \$10,000 grant is made possible from the sale of Conservation license plates and is outright; no matching funds are required. The work must comply with Secretary of Interior Standards. Applications are being accepted until the middle of April, 2012.

Needed roof repairs for both Town owned structures, the former library building on Front St. and the Raynes Barn would fall into this category. Discussion followed on the feasibility of filing for both of the structures. Consensus was the \$10,000 would go further to replace the asphalt roof at Raynes than the \$90,000 anticipated for the slate roof repairs to former library building.

When questioned, Mr. Michaud reported HB 1274 that was to abolish the Department of Cultural Resources and transfer the State Library and the Division of Historic Resources to Department of State, had been modified to transfer the State owned McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center to a private operator.

With no further business Ms. Corson motioned to adjourned: seconded by Ms. Gilman. Vote carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub

Recording Secretary