

Heritage Commission

Wheelwright Room

Exeter Town Office Bldg.

May 09, 2012

Members present: *Selectman Rep. Julie Gilman, Mary Dupré, John Merkle and Chairman Peter Michaud*

Chairman Peter Michaud called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the Wheelwright Room in the Exeter Town Office Building.

- Approval of minutes of April 11, 2012 meeting
Ms. Gilman moved to accept the draft minutes as presented; seconded by Ms. Dupré. Motion carried.
- Update on Exeter River Great Dam removal study
A public meeting is set for May 23, 2012 at Exeter Town Hall; more details available on Town website.
- CLG grant; town mapping
The consultants were to be at this meeting to provide update but unable to attend. The Commission does need to see a progress report by next month as outlined in contract; Ms. Gilman will contact.
- CLG future grant proposal: Historic District Commission (HDC)
Ms. Gilman distributed a preliminary narrative to be submitted with the grant application due May 23, 2012. Using Somersworth, NH for a model, she explained this is to be a survey of a historic district (the High Street District) but more than an individual survey of each building; one that highlights the defining architectural features of the individual properties. Mr. Michaud offered that in the Somersworth survey each property had an individual form; survey information on front and then a modified architectural description included. He suggested a DHR staff member be contacted to obtain a copy of that town's grant application to see grant description; for comparison.

It was agreed this will be an excellent reference tool and Ms. Gilman hopes it will encourage more residents to volunteer for the HDC knowing there is material available for guidance and support when reviewing a proposed project/renovation.

- Update on Form Based Codes.
Ms. Gilman stated work was progressing but was unsure of what next steps would be after a recent ZORC meeting when the topic was discussed. Mr. Merkle remarked the goal was to get it resolved and in place by September for it to appear on March 2013 ballot.
- Winter Street cemetery announcement
Mr. Michaud announced the Winter Street cemetery was named to the NH Register of Historic Places on April 30, 2012. A press release from DHR appeared in the May 8, 2012 edition of the Exeter Newsletter. The public response appears positive; Ms. Gilman may post something on Town web site.

- Baggage building project

Ms. Gilman reported the process is moving slower than desired or anticipated. In following the requirements of the DOT grant each step must be detailed and presented to DOT for approval before moving onto the next task.

Mr. Michaud explained because Federal funds are involved this needs to be the process; cannot have an adverse effect with this project. He continued by suggesting any involvement ahead of time by the interest groups would benefit the program; have the Heritage group meet with the appropriate committee to do a site visit and discuss what is character defining (in the building) and what isn't and what is the plan. Ms. Gilman noted that is on the task list and being planned for.

Ms. Gilman asked for clarification of the Section 106 review process as it pertains to this project. After some discussion, Mr. Michaud agreed to review further. Ms. Gilman was appreciative as the outcome will make a difference in budgeting. Discussion then focused on potential costs and source of funds if a Park Service qualified consultant is required to complete an inventory form; all to-be-determined.

- Future project discussion

The conversation on potential projects was posed at a previous meeting, but Mr. Michaud felt this discussion be postponed until more members of the Commission are in attendance.

Mr. Michaud read a letter received from Arcadia Publishing inviting the Heritage Commission to participate in an upcoming Legendary Locals series. The new imprint celebrates those individuals who have made a memorable impact on their community throughout its history.

Comments determined this was not the time to pursue this undertaking. Mr. Michaud will respond to author noting the offer is appreciated but at this time suggest they may wish to contact the Exeter Historical Society or the American Independence Museum as possible partners for the publication.

Discussion turned to the upcoming 375th anniversary for the Town. Ms. Gilman noted a group of individuals are volunteering to work on the event(s); will be meeting with them soon to learn of ideas. Mr. Michaud listed a number of possible events; tours, special day at American Independence Museum, band concert; special directory listing location and time of planned events; felt the need to capitalize on the resources available in the Town to have that anniversary celebrated. The discussion will continue when more members of the Commission are present.

- Demolition requests

Ms. Gilman reported the Academy presented plans for renovations to the Model House located at 6 Spring St. at the April meeting of the Historic District Commission. The plan includes the removal of the porch and stairs and a back chimney. A stair tower will be added to the back. The porch was not original and the proposed addition is sensitive to the main building and no change to the front façade. Mr. Merkle offered a recently acquired site plan shows part of the addition/ building extending into the set back; working with Code Enforcement officer for guidance on how to proceed.

Minutes approved at July 16, 2012 meeting

- Properties at risk

Mr. Michaud commented the spring tour of the Vernacular Architectural Forum visited three sites in Exeter one being the Fogg-Rollins house. Having been inside the home when the collections were still in place, he had further appreciation of the interior features devoid of its former contents, meeting the new owners and learning more of their plans for the renovation. Thought it would be exciting to see the property transformed; a property no longer at risk.

With no further business, Ms. Gilman motioned to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Dupré. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub
Recording Secretary