

Exeter Heritage Commission

Wheelwright Room

Exeter Town Office Bldg.

August 15, 2012

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

Guests: *Mike Collopy and Bob Collopy*

Chairman Michaud called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Wheelwright Room in the Town office building

- Mr. Michaud introduced Mike Collopy, an Exeter Boy Scout, prepared to speak to his proposed Eagle Scout project for work on the Powder Mill trail along the Exeter River. Mike distributed a printed map of the location. The areas of focus are to build a bridge across the width of an existing canal channel, do general maintenance on the trail to make it more accessible, tackle the invasive plants present along the trail and install signage at the trail head noting the history of this area along Powder Mill trail. The present trail starts at Route 111 and runs about a third of a mile along the river. There is no connection to another trail nor is there a loop; trail users can exit directly onto Powder Mill Road. The land is Town owned conservation land and the trail is used primarily by fishermen.

Following his presentation, Mr. Michaud commented on how he liked Mike's interest in wanting to bring more attention to this locale and the history of the spot. But he did add, this is an area of high archeological sensitivity for settlement and activity along the river and whenever you are looking at ground disturbance there is the need to determine the best way to proceed to keep any disturbance to a minimum. He added archeology is a form of preservation and there are both State and Federal rules and regulations to help determine how to proceed.

When asked about the design of the crossing, Mike replied he has support personnel to aid in the design and construction of the bridge. Mr. Michaud noted in spite of their expertise, most likely they are not preservationists; suggested when the plans for the bridge are determined they be submitted to State historical archeologist to confirm the approach is satisfactory (for minimum impact). The stones lining the channel are close to 200 years old and there is the need to be certain the bridge is not going to put pressure on the walls. Ms. Dupré expressed her concern by calling attention to the stone walls there is the potential for human removal.

Mike was asked if he was willing to do some research for the information on his signage; the Commission would provide links and resources. Also, to include signage noting that looting an archeological site is a felony with a fine and prosecution. Ms. Dupré added her concern is there is so much information on the site she is not quite sure what to put on the sign; various mills were located along a dam during different periods; part of Exeter's industrial heritage.

As for a time frame for the project, Mike would need to be complete by June 2013. He was advised if there are permits needed that would factor into his planning; suggested he confer with Town Natural Resource Planner/Town Planner. Because Ms. Dupré is so knowledgeable on the area, she was asked and agreed to pull together some resources to share with Mike.

A site walk with Mike and members of the Heritage and Conservation Commissions was set for Friday August 25, 2012 at 5 pm; it will be posted as a public meeting. With no further questions or concerns from the Commission or the presenter, Mike was thanked for coming and his interest in this project.

- Approval of minutes

Ms. Dupré motioned to accept the draft minutes of the June 13, 2012 meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried; Mr. Merkle abstaining.

Ms. Gilman motioned to accept the draft minutes of the July 16, 2012 meeting as presented; seconded by Ms. Dupré. Motion carried; Ms. Corson and Mr. Lopez abstaining.

- Exeter River Great Dam removal study.

Ms. Gilman re-iterated the State Division of Historical Resources (DHR) expressed their opinion/concerns that the Dam is a part of the industrial history of the Town and did not wish to see it removed; by itself it does not qualify as a historic resource but did as a contributing resource to the larger district. The study is not complete with any recommendations for removal or repair; ultimately it will be the decision of the Town voters.

- CLG grant update: town mapping and grant deadline details

Mr. Michaud stated the grant project needs to be complete by the end of September, but there are draft deadlines before that time. Ms. Gilman reported she did submit the maps and accompanying draft narrative as viewed at the June meeting to Deb Gagne, the grant coordinator at DHR who with the preservation planner, oversees the program.

Mr. Harvey will not be able to return to Exeter until sometime in September but did contact Ms. Gilman and reported he is working on the concerns and comments expressed at the July meeting. Also if members had any comments on the draft narrative to pass on to Ms. Gilman so they may be forward to Mr. Harvey for inclusion in the final report.

- Form Based Code (FBC) update

Ms. Corson reported the subcommittee is working on language to be submitted for changes in the Zoning Ordinances on March ballot. What is being proposed provides owners more flexibility in its use. In order for it to be on the Town ballot in March, the proposed change needs to be submitted in a timely manner to the Planning Board to allow for the required two public hearings. The work group is not moving away from FBC but setting it up so it (FBC) will come thru Sites and Subdivision regulations to facilitate an application.

Because there is more work to be done in exploring the language and drafting of such an ordinance, the assistance and services of a consultant is needed. Ms. Gilman replied she did apply for a grant for such assistance but was not successful. The subcommittee is looking at the Town of Durham and what they are doing but their work is still in draft form; suggested their efforts be viewed (Commercial Core Strategic Plan Draft Zoning Amendments) on Town of Durham site to see what this committee is working towards.

- **Baggage Building**

Ms. Gilman said the process may now begin to move forward at a faster pace as it was determined you can do items simultaneously without having to receive approval for one thing before moving on; also means now can get (property) appraisal to enter into a purchase and sales agreement with the present owners sooner than anticipated.

- **Future project discussion (walking tours etc.)**

Ms. Gilman said in reading over the Town Master Plan, walking tours were referenced in several instances. There is the need to work with Historical Society on any update; the need to educate more on the history. The Historical Society did prepare a walking tour brochure in the early 90's but is not current; may need more than one brochure for the different areas of Town.

As for the two thousand dollars the Historical Society is willing to give to the Heritage Commission (not the Town), Mr. Michaud explained the Historical Society as a private 501c3 had funds in an account designated for a specific purpose; a purpose the Historical Society is not in a position to fulfill. They are willing to donate to a separate entity if the expressed purpose of the funds could be realized; to the Heritage Commission to create signage.

Mr. Lopez has done some investigation of the costs and materials for various types of signage. In discussion with Mr. Smith did feel the company in contract with the Federal Government for doing the National Park Service signs was a favorable selection. Although not a metalloid, the materials are a digital high pressure laminate that permits images and writing and lasts for up to 10 years.

It was noted Portsmouth is re-doing some of their signs done in the 70's and it was suggested to seek out members of the Portsmouth Historical Society for information on their work; also suggested to contact Nancy Carmer in the Planning Dept. for the City of Portsmouth.

With several historical signs to be replaced /created Mr. Smith asked if there was any thought to have something standard, something indicative of all historic signs; would be nice to have some guidelines.

Following more discussion on signage, Mr. Michaud summarized where the commission was: to talk with Portsmouth and gather information on their endeavors with signage and to decide what would be appropriate guidelines for signage; what is the purview of the Heritage Commission in this role as the Commission is advisory only. It would also involve the Historic District Commission as many of the signs would be in their Districts.

Ms. Gilman felt signage relates to more than the Historic District; also thinking if this is a Town-wide undertaking maybe it will be the Board of Selectmen that chooses the template. Mr. Michaud felt by addressing these issues it will be laying down the foundation for future work involving the various private and municipal groups; to build a consensus and partnerships. This network will be crucial when the matter of funding is approached; this is just the beginning of what we are trying to achieve.

- **Raynes Barn Roof Replacement.**

A memo dated August 14,, 2012 was sent electronically to the members from Kristen Murphy, Town Natural Resource Planner asking for a letter of support as the Conservation Commission is submitting a request for \$30,000 as a Capital Improvement Project for the roof replacement. Ms. Murphy states the Raynes property is a culturally, historically and aesthetically rich property in Exeter and as such feels the Planning Board would benefit from the position of the Heritage Commission if it received its support. It was determined it (the request) has gone before the Planning Board once and ultimately it will be the BOS that decides what CIP projects go to the voters for approval. Also mentioned was the intent to apply in 2013 for a Moose Plate grant and if successful would offset the cost of the roof replacement up to \$10,000.

Mr. Smith made the motion that the Heritage Commission send a letter of support for the roof replacement at the Raynes Barn; seconded by Ms. Corson. Calling for a vote, motion carried. Mr. Michaud will draft a letter of support and forward on to the Planning Board and copied to the Budget Review Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

- Demolition Requests

Ms. Gilman reported on a request to demolish a residential garage at 16 Epping Road; will be replaced by another garage/structure. It does have some late 18th century features that have been altered several times but is in a state of disrepair. When Ms. Gilman writes the letter approving the demolition she will suggest salvaging the bead board that is presently used inside the building for use elsewhere and to be sensitive to the National Historic Register home next door.

Ms. Gilman spoke of the need to modify the present language of the demolition review ordinance. She added as part of the demolition review might want to have photographs of any structure that replaces the structure torn down; “the before and the after photos”.

- Properties at Risk/ Other Business

The property owner of the Tuck House at 89 Front St. is scheduled to come before the HDC at their next meeting to ask for an extension on their June 2011 approval to build a connector between two buildings.

Ms. Corson reported she recently visited the site of the former Reedy House (Gooch Farm) on the Kingston Road, now part of the Riverwood’s campus and noted they salvaged the cupola and some foundation stones and incorporated them into the new construction.

Mr. Merkle questioned the outcome of a letter circulated by Ms. Gjettum, chairwoman of the Historic District Commission (HDC), on a request for a historical marker for a residence in Town; was uncertain of criteria for such. It was noted the July meeting of the HDC was not held so it has not been reviewed but Ms. Gilman answered you rely on the person applying to provide the research they have done as far back as they can. But again want what is on signage to be accurate.

With no further business, Ms. Corson motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Smith. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary