

Exeter Historical District Commission

Draft Minutes

March 19, 2015

Call meeting to order. Patrick Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Novak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Julie Gilman, Selectwoman, Len Benjamin, Fred Kollmorgen, Valerie Ouellette and Nicole Martineau

Patrick started the meeting with new business which is the application of Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc. for review of the proposal to rehabilitate the two historic reinforced concrete rigid frame bridges known as String Bridge and associated roadway approach work located in the downtown area. The subject property is located in the WC-Waterfront Commercial zoning district.

Jen Links got up to speak. She is the Assistant Town Engineer and will be the Project Manager working on the String Bridge project. This has been in the works for a while. Funding has come available through DOT for this and we went through the process of selecting a consultant and have chosen Tanner & Associates. They are here tonight to talk a little about what they have done so far in their preliminary studies and give an idea of what the bridge will look like when it is all repaired.

Shawn James spoke next and stated he wanted to go over the project. Tonight I will talk a little bit about the project, the funding program, what the purpose and need of it is and summarize. The bridges cross onto Kimball Island where the rivers meet. Great Dam is just upstream. They were both built in 1935.

The bridges are inspected biannually by DOT, so they come out every two years. We are investigating alternatives because of the inspection and the town is looking for different alternatives. The funding is through the DOT Municipal Bridge Aid Program. This is a state program. Through this program, the town receives 80% reimbursement for all costs. The town would share the remaining 20%. It is a very good program and it has five basic steps and we are in step one. The first step is a study. Then it moves into a preliminary study and final design. Put it out for bids and then final last stage is construction. The process includes this Section 106 review. This is through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This is part of why we are here tonight, for input. The bridges are located in the historic district.

Shawn stated that they recently hired a Historic Documentation Company to do an individual inventory form on both bridges to see if they are eligible for the National Register. Their initial thought is that they are.

There are some structural deficiencies to the bridge. The purpose is to provide access to Kimball Ave. The other purpose of the project is to address that need for access while trying to minimize cost and construction duration and inconvenience to the public.

So far as of today, we have completed a ground level survey and concrete testing. A visual and arms reach inspection was also done. Utility coordination has also been started.

Most of the concrete bridge rail is in pretty good condition and can be repaired. One exception is on the east bridge, the north rail. This one is in poor condition and will probably need to be replaced. Our

process for a concrete repair is the first thing is chip out the bad concrete. We would also put some penetrating chemicals on it. Most of the repairs are due to years and years of salt damage.

Valerie asked how long this type of repair lasts. Shawn stated that if it is done well, maybe 20 to 30 years. It also depends on how much salt you have.

Shawn stated that when the repair work is done, it should look pretty much like what was already there.

Patrick asked if there was any kind of sealer with stain in it that could be used so that the patches don't show through. Shawn stated that once all the repairs are done, they will be putting a clear sealant on.

What Patrick is talking about is something with a pigment in it. This is something they can look into, but the color is gray and trying to get the exact color you want is difficult.

The preferred alternative is the rehabilitation. What the plan is right now as far as construction is to close one bridge. Make all the repairs and then switch to the other side.

Julie asked if any stake holders have come forth. Shawn stated as of date, none. Everyone has been notified. Jen stated that public notice has been given and she spoke with the owner of the island so he knows what the plan is.

Julie stated that she has not seen the inventory form as of yet. Shawn stated that there are two parts to this project. There is NHDOT and Division of Historic Resources. They have a cultural resource committee meeting once a month. We were there last week at the meeting to present the project and they had no objections to it. Shawn stated he will send the committee a copy of the form.

Patrick asked if there was an expected construction time yet. Shawn stated they do not and he does not know what that would be. Julie asked if they need to get permission from the Army Corp. of Engineers. Shawn stated that they shouldn't. He thinks it will fall under a standard permit.

Patrick asked if perhaps in repairing, they could preserve some of the texture in doing the repairs.

Shawn stated he knows this is a concern and his firm does a lot of historic bridges. As far as the repairs, there are a few things you can do. The smaller ones are usually a repair border. The other one is the sealer. Shawn suggested perhaps providing some photos of where the sealer was used and what it looks like and then perhaps build it into the contract.

Jen spoke again stating that there were gas light fixtures on the bridge at one point and just fell apart and were taken down and she thinks there may be bits and pieces of them in storage somewhere. The lights on the Great Bridge are actually replicates of those lights. There is the option to re-create those lights. This will depend on cost and budget. Nicole mentioned perhaps using Northern Lanterns based right here in Exeter. Jen will look into this.

Patrick stated that as an application for the commission, it is more informative than anything else. He stated that instead of making this a formal application or approval, just say who is in favor and who is not. Julie stated that she thinks all we need are the comments and Len agreed.

Shawn stated that they put it in as a formal application just to get the notice to the abutters. Len asked if he received any comments from the abutters and there were none.

Nicole stated very simply, the color, texture and the lighting which would be a wonderful addition makes it pretty straight forward otherwise and stated the commission appreciates their time.

Other Business:

Patrick started with the approval of the minutes from January 15, 2015. After some discussion and Julie stating she will speak with Barbara, Fred made a motion to approve with the corrections. Patrick seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Next business is the minutes from February 19, 2015. Fred made a motion to approve with corrections. Nicole seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Patrick stated the last business is the Exeter CLG Grant discussions and updates. Nicole stated that they put a flyer together and is being distributed to the Historic District Commission as well as the Heritage Commission and they will send it also to a few of the town staff, Doug Eastman and Sylvia. There is going to be a half-day session. At this point, it will be Julie, Patrick and me. Nicole stated that ideally, they do need to get a head count for this session. We have to match funds for this with the grant money and our fund matching is mostly in our hours of attendance. Nicole feels that this is going to be a very important session for the commission. She also thinks it will be fun. Patrick stated this is a volunteer board and we cannot make this mandatory, but it is strongly recommended that you attend if at all possible. Nicole then stated that they are also putting together a lecture series and that is in motion now. The first one is going to be about what paint color your house should be based on the style and the second part is going to be architectural styles. They are a little bit backwards to some degree, but spring is coming and we thought it was important to get that one in as soon as we can. It will be April 21st or the 28th. Nicole stated she is still trying to get ahold of Pam to do it at the Historical Society. The second one will be approximately a month later in May. Patrick stated that he did get a response from Pam saying she wasn't going to be at the meeting tonight and she also says I know the dates of when you want to use the Historical Society and that is fine, just let me know. Nicole stated she will call Barbara just to confirm.

Julie stated that she just wanted to be clear that the grant was applied for and awarded to the HDC, but was proposed that we work with the Heritage Commission. So when we are talking about what color is your house, it is from the Heritage Commission. Nicole stated that the HDC has no ruling over your color. We are just doing this as a public outreach. Patrick stated that it is more for education. Nicole will send out the dates as soon as they are finalized.

With no further business, Nicole made a motion to adjourn. Len seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary