

1 Heritage Commission

2 January 21,2020

3 Final Minutes

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5 Members Present: John Merkle, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Maura Fay, Jay Myers

6 Call Meeting To Order: John Merkle, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the Wheelwright  
7 Room of the Exeter Town Office Building

8 First Business: Approval of the November 19,2019 Minutes. After the members reviewed and had a few  
9 changes, Pam made a motion to accept as amended. Jay seconded. All were in favor and minutes  
10 approved.

11 John stated that the next on the agenda is an update on Park and Cass Streets survey. He said that he  
12 re-read it again when he had to do the annual report for the Heritage Commission. He stated that it is  
13 very well done. He thinks they need to explore how to get some mileage out of it. There were a lot of  
14 people who did not even realize that they were in it. John and Maura both did not know that Locust  
15 Street was being included in it. John then stated that the rationale for it, he thinks they made a very  
16 good case for it. What he found a little bit surprising is they call it The Park Street Historic District  
17 Survey. Once this hits the press, it will get some attention. Maura asked John if he has a copy that was  
18 sent to him. He does and he said they call it the draft, but there are only a few things that changed in it.  
19 They acknowledged that 7 Oak Street was no longer there or at least in the one John had, it was taken  
20 out. He also has a second draft and it is electronic. Maura asked him if he could send it to her. John will  
21 burn a couple of CDs for her. He will check with Barbara to see if there are still two copies in the  
22 Planning Department for anyone to view. This was the first go around when this was going to be two  
23 surveys. Lynn Monroe got together with Nadine up in Concord and they said no, treat it all as one. Jay  
24 asked what sort of benefits the Heritage Commission could expect. John said to notify everybody. Jay  
25 asked about signage. Maura asked if this is a step to because they had talked about a Heritage District  
26 designation. Pam stated that the Historical Society has been working on expanding the Walking Tours  
27 and this is part of the area they want to do it in. This is a way that things are going to happen. She also  
28 would like to get a copy of it and have it at the Historical Society. John told Pam that he personally paid  
29 to have it printed. Maura asked if they pursue the Heritage District designation, what steps would they  
30 take. She then asked if the commission had done anything like this before. John said they had not and  
31 it would be a first time for them. John is not sure if the Preservation Alliance actually does anything with  
32 these. He thinks it is a federal program. Pam said they paid for the first walking tour pamphlets for the  
33 Historical Society. It was a grant from them. She said it was back when no one had heard of them and  
34 there were only around five towns applying. John will call Lynn first and he also wants to have her send  
35 him a couple of pictures so he can put it into the annual report. Maura found on line a handbook for NH  
36 Heritage Districts and it is from 2008. It is something they can look into. John thinks they can download  
37 the application from DHR on line. Pam asked how the Heritage District is different from a Historic  
38 District. Maura read a little from the online handbook. The Neighborhood Heritage District is a zoning  
39 mechanism that focuses on protecting the key character of an area. The chief objective is to protect  
40 neighborhood character and the shared features of buildings located there rather than details, such as

41 window sash, doors and trim pertaining to individual buildings. The term character implies that rather  
42 than oversee minor alterations to individual buildings, the district will protect those significant features  
43 that defines a property or setting. Those features would be decided by the community. John said that a  
44 five story building would not apply to Lincoln Street. The hardware store and having the little strip mall  
45 are all part of the neighborhood. John then asked if a commission has to be formed. Maura read  
46 through and it says it requires a District Advisory Committee to be established. John said that this  
47 committee would make rules. Maura said that is correct. They would be the body that would say this is  
48 what we are considering as important characteristics of this neighborhood. John said they could look at  
49 the Historic District Guidelines. John thinks the concept is good because you are not telling someone  
50 what they can't do to their house. You are telling them what they need to do to protect it.

51 John stated that he had just learned that one of the things being discussed across the street is that they  
52 want to put five story buildings downtown and on Lincoln Street. Pam said that it is going to be a zoning  
53 amendment and it is going to be on the warrant. It is proposed as a zoning amendment. Jay asked  
54 about the parking lot next door and what that was going to be. Maura said it is going to only two or  
55 three stories because they are just going to be condos. John said that it is definitely out of scale for the  
56 community. The members all agreed with him. Pam said that she did go the meeting in December and  
57 there were a lot of people who were for this for downtown and specifically Lincoln Street. Pam said it is  
58 scary and Maura said it is a little alarming. Maura said she could see the little strip mall with a two or  
59 three story would make sense and it could fit in. John said that he could not imagine that and the whole  
60 neighborhood would change immensely. He said none of the buildings are deep enough to be five  
61 stories. Pam said supposedly the fact that there is a railroad station means that there should be housing  
62 right there. She does not know why anyone would want to live right next to a railroad station. John  
63 then asked the members how we begin with this. No one really knows. Maura suggested that perhaps  
64 they take a look at the handbook individually and bring some thoughts to the next meeting. Maura said  
65 it does look like a pretty intense process, so it may be something that would be hard to get traction on.  
66 She does not know how many people in the neighborhood would be that keen on it. Jay stated that he  
67 was envisioning a press release and a call about the Heritage destination. There is a model to go on and  
68 handbook. John said they should get it out so that people know they are a part of it because the ones  
69 who are going to be voting for putting in a five story building, may not even live in the district. Maura  
70 will e-mail everyone the Heritage District destination information.

71 Next is the discussion on the EMMIT System. John does not know if any of the members have had  
72 access to it. He took a look at it two months ago and it is very similar to what they have for the town GSI  
73 maps and the data you can access. He does not really see this commission needing to do it because they  
74 know what most of it is. He said he read somewhere that there is a 120 day learning period where they  
75 could get access to. He hopes Julie will let them know how to get to it when the time comes and  
76 someone wants to do some research and think they want to access that information. Pam then asked  
77 what was in this that they don't already have. John said if you wanted to see what was done in another  
78 community, you can access it. John said that he thinks he read in the survey that the map is going to be  
79 put on our town GS Map. He has not had a chance to check this, but if that is the case, little postcards  
80 can be sent out to everyone. Pam then asked if the commission had enough money to send postcards  
81 to all in the district. John does not know and Jay said it was a good question. John said they could wait  
82 for a warm day and just walk around like they did the last time and pass them out.

83 The Heritage Commission budget for 2020: John said that he and Julie were starting to have a  
84 conversation about it and then it started expanding again.

85 Next is the discussion on possibly assisting the American Heritage Museum with one of their events.  
86 John stated that he really does not know anything about the museum and they wanted the commission  
87 to partner with them. Pam said that Julie would like the commission to sponsor one of their events.  
88 They do not have any one to pay for the re-enactors and they are the most expensive. Pam then stated  
89 that there now is \$10,000 in the HDC Budget. Pam said that she does not mind doing something for the  
90 museum. It would be good to get their name out. John said he would be curious as to how much  
91 money they cost. Pam always thought the re-enactors came for free. John said that they are  
92 professionals and they travel from site to site. Jay stated that his understanding is that someone from  
93 the commission would coordinate with the re-enactors as well to see what they wanted to off load some  
94 of the personnel responsibility. Pam then stated that the commission really needs Julie to be here.  
95 Everyone agreed. Jay is willing to team up in some way because it gets our name out there. Pam said  
96 that people do not know who they are. Jay said with this, some sort of press release will get our name  
97 out there. It is a perfect opportunity to get some exposure. John is still confused as to who runs what.  
98 He asked if the museum had two boards. Pam said, not really. The building is owned by the Society of  
99 Cincinnati who are elderly and dying off. Jay asked if they were families and Pam said they were and  
100 they pass the membership down. The membership gets diluted every year because people die off or  
101 marry out. There is another board that runs the museum and all the festivities. They are always fixing  
102 up the house as well because it is old. John said that the society members are not very cooperative. Jay  
103 stated that part of last month's minutes identified that Emma, the Director of the museum was going to  
104 be invited to a meeting. Pam said that would be a good idea because then they would actually find out  
105 what is needed. John said they will have to get Julie to make that arrangement. Pam said that she  
106 would like to talk to Emma and find out exactly what she wants and how much she wants from the  
107 commission. John said that he would be a little cautious if they do this. Is the commission going to be  
108 obligated to do this every year? If it is going to be a significant amount of money, the commission does  
109 not have it right now. John asked if the re-enactors bring their own tents and things. Jay and Maura  
110 said that they do. It is all of their stuff. Jay said that they really do a good job. Pam said they are a great  
111 draw.

112 The next on the agenda is the discussion of unpermitted demolition/possible demolition review  
113 changes. Pam said that there is not much they can do about it. You are not supposed to do it and that  
114 was very clear. Maura said they discussed the last time about are there any changes that could be made  
115 to regulations or something. Pam stated that this was the first one that has happened. Maura said that  
116 considering this is a onetime thing that has happened, maybe say hopefully it does not happen again. Is  
117 there really anything else they can do? Pam said that there really isn't anything they can do. She does  
118 not even know who is planning to do this. John said that he would like to see something come out of it.  
119 The part of the commission having to review it, he thinks they should get some funding from it and with  
120 the money, promote what they need to. Maura asked if they could just change the Town Ordinance.  
121 John said they could do that or ask the Building Department to make every demolition permit instead of  
122 \$1 per thousand, \$10 per thousand. Pam said they talked about that with Doug and he said they could  
123 do that and he was going to double it for after the fact permits. John said that was a little different.  
124 Pam then asked if builders know that they need permits for demolition. Maura said that they must

125 know that they need permits of some kind. John said that you have to turn your power and gas off and  
126 they have to inspect these so they would know they need permits.

127 Discussion of having all Heritage Commission meetings recorded and televised at a regularly scheduled  
128 time. Pam said that there was nobody here today, but usually there are those two young men. John  
129 said that the commission has only been filmed once or twice. Maura said that last year there was a  
130 discussion that all official town meetings would or should be televised. John said they would have to be  
131 broadcasted when people were actually going to watch it. Maura said that you can live stream on the  
132 town web site. Pam and Maura both said that there are actually people who do watch the meetings.  
133 Pam and Maura have no objection to be televised. John said that Julie mentioned the commission might  
134 have to get financial appropriation to do this. Pam thinks that they do not have to do this and it is just  
135 part of the deal. Jay said that when they did do it, it made things more formal. He likes the informality  
136 of the meetings. Maura said that there could be people out there watching who do not even know this  
137 commission exists, maybe they could find people who would be interested in being a member. Others  
138 may like the things the commission is interested in. John then asked the members if they wanted to  
139 take a vote on the possibility of having the meetings televised. Jay said that he is up for it with  
140 provisions. Maura made a motion to have the meetings recorded and televised at the regularly  
141 scheduled time. Pam seconded. All were in favor and motion approved.

142 Other Business: Pam said that someone needs to speak with Julie who needs to speak to Emma and find  
143 out what she is looking for and how much money. She also said that someone needs to talk to Bob  
144 about televising the commission meetings. Maura asked John if he could speak with Dave Sharples  
145 (Town Planner) about getting the survey up on the town web site, if that would be the person to go to.  
146 John is not sure who would take care of that, and said that Barbara would probably know. Pam said that  
147 she will talk with Barbara about it when she sees her about getting a copy of the survey.

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

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151 Respectfully submitted,

152 Elizabeth Herrick

153 Recording Secretary

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