

Heritage Commission

June 16, 2020

Final Minutes

Members Present: John Merkle, Chairman, Julie Gilman, Select Board, Pam Gjetlum, Clerk, Jay Myers, Vice Chair, Maura Fay, Treasurer

Call Meeting To Order: John Merkle, Chairman, called the ZOOM meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

First Business: Approval of the May 19, 2020 meeting minutes. After the members reviewed and made a few changes, Julie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes were approved.

Next on the agenda is the discussion of Park/Cass Streets Heritage District. John stated that he, Pam and Jay threw out their initial thoughts of the door hanger. In the process of this, Julie had done some investigation as to how Public Works goes about doing their notifications. The consensus with that is they get better results with postcards. Julie said that what she found out is that the people who do the public meetings when a project is happening in someone's neighborhood and they found door hangers just did not really work because the hangers are usually from the water/sewer department telling you that you are about to have your service turned off. They found that postcards were easy to do and can be done inhouse. Julie thinks they have to budget to do this in house. John said that he made a list of what they needed to say and tried to think of a way to put it together to generate some interest. He got a comment from Pam that she thought it was too long and John said it was. John then said that Jay said something this afternoon that summaries what both he and Pam were thinking about. He thinks it is worth talking about. Jay asked Julie what the size of the postcards were. Julie said she did not ask that question. She said given they have a lot of things they want to say, the 5x7 would work. Pam said a 5x7 is bigger than a normal size postcard and was wondering if it costs more postage. Julie said that is a good question to find out. Pam then said that she thinks Jay's would fit on a normal size postcard. Maura said she thought it would too with a little trimming here and there. She also said the one that John and Julie put together would be great for a public meeting as a hand out because it lays out the distinctions nice and clear. Julie said that when the Historic District Commission produced the HC new Guideline, they sent a postcard to all the people in the historic districts. The postcards were 5x7 that were sent out. Pam said it cost quite a bit, but she does not remember what exactly. Jay said there was something else he would like to suggest when the commission decides to put some language on one side of the card from the commission. He likes the Heritage District document #2 which is a three panel document and the panel to the right explains what a Heritage District is. Could this be copied onto the backside of the card. It explains in essence what the Heritage District is and why they are asking for citizens to participate. Pam said she was hoping for a map of the district on the

other side of the postcard. Julie said it is a good idea, although they are targeting a specific neighborhood. It will go addressed to the people who are in the district. She said they should think about squeezing a map in there somewhere. Maura said they could superimpose it over a map. Perhaps put the wording over the outline. Jay said he was thinking about this too. Shadow in the background with printing on the top.

John asked about the contact piece and how they will handle that. Who do they direct the people to if there are questions. Maura's question was are they asking people to contact them because they want to get involved. She then said that they had talked about having some sort of a public meeting to explain this to people. John said this is the objective. Maura feels that it would make more sense to maybe have a date set and check the town website for the date, rather than ask people to contact them. Julie said what they should do is pick a date and tell people where this public meeting is going to be held and have a line saying for more information see the Heritage Commission website and make sure this document is right up at the top. Pam asked when could they actually have a public meeting. She asked if anyone had any idea. Maura said that technically, today. Julie said the town has not decided yet. They are letting businesses do what the Governor says they can do. They really only have control over their own buildings. The town hall is ok and they can fit a fair number of people in there with social distancing. There is a screen, wi-fi and a projector. Pam said they could have it Labor Day weekend because they are not having the UFO Festival this year. John asked if they could pull something together between now and then. Maura said she thinks they can. Julie said if they have assignments, she thinks they could too. Maura said it would be nice to avoid the holiday weekend, but maybe the week before or after it. Julie said they could shoot for that weekend because they still have a few months to see if that needs to change because of whatever happens because of the virus. Maura said they could pick a date and it could be in a physical place, or virtual. Jay said he is leaning towards an idea that perhaps they identify who in the community wants to participate first. He worries that they go ahead, pick a date, organize themselves to have an open public forum and then nobody shows up. Julie asked him if he wanted to test the waters a little bit and Jay said he did. Pam would like to hold a meeting to at least tell people what it is because no one is going to volunteer until they find out what they are volunteering for. Maura said that maybe a virtual meeting is better in a lot of ways and it could be recorded and they could send a link out or publicize it, if people had missed it. She also agrees with Pam. John stated that he has another thought. He wants to know when they approach the Planning Board. Julie said that is the bigger question of who is going to show up because most of the demand for this goes to the Planning Board. Maura said that the way she read it was that an advisory group was the decision making body. Pam thought the same thing. John said the easiest way to do this is to make it an overlay district, which puts it in the Planning Board realm. The citizen group from the neighborhood is going to be in charge of putting together the limits of the regulations. Pam and Maura both stated that they totally misunderstood this. Pam thought it would be better because it would not have the picky little rules. Julie said if you read the whole document, it is almost like a historic district except the regulatory power lies with the Planning Board. John said this is based on the advice from the citizens committee for the district. Julie said it did not talk about windows, but it does include things like removing a porch or adding a dormer.

John said he thinks the commission needs to do some research into this first because they cannot approach the public without knowing if the Planning Board is going on board with this. Julie asked if they should invite someone from DHR to come and talk about it. Pam thought that would be a good idea because none of the members really know much about the details. Julie said it is either that or contemplate changing it and calling it a Heritage Neighborhood instead of a Heritage District and if they want to make it more advisory and not involve the Planning Board. Maura asked if it was a good idea to invite someone from the Planning Board to come and talk with the commission to see if this is something they could take on. Julie said that they definitely have to do that. The question is do they want to get someone from DHR and the Planning Board at the same meeting and she thinks this would be best. Julie asked John if there was someone else they should talk to about this and was it Liz Hengen who wrote the guideline. John said that Liz wrote it and Caroline Baldwin. He has known Caroline, not very well, but for a long time. She is a land use lawyer. She has been a friend of the preservation efforts for 40 or 50 years. Julie asked John if they should talk to Nadine about what they can gather up. If we are going ahead with this as it is presented by DHR with the regulatory matters, it might be a good idea to have that lawyer there if we can. John said he will take this up tomorrow because he has a meeting with NH Preservation Alliance. He said they might be the ones who might want to do it because what DHR has been trying to do over the years is transfer some of the public pieces of things more closely over to the private sector. They have the ability to generate revenue when they want to investigate something. He is almost certain they put together that outline booklet through DHR and Preservation Alliance. John then said they should step backwards. They started out with a door hanger and decided on a postcard. Julie said and we don't know what to put on it. John said he thinks they have a pretty good idea of what to put on it, but where do they direct it to and what are they going to be looking for next. Pam said, are we going to have this meeting and if we do have this meeting, when and where and with whom. Julie said that she thinks Jay's point was correct and that the with whom might be the first part they want to do. This is where the postcard can be used to introduce the topic and direct people to our website for further information. Julie does not think they have to stipulate when they are going to have a meeting until they know what the interest is. That will change where or how they have a meeting. Maura asked about doing a survey monkey and just have the link available on our page. Julie said that was a good idea. Maura said something like, yes I want to know more about what a Heritage Neighborhood is and here is my availability and the commission can give a range of dates. Julie said this makes the postcard even simpler. John said they will be directing people to a site essentially. Julie said she thinks they need to put this on their website so they can also see all the other stuff the commission has. Other surveys and things like that. Julie said the speakers the commission wants to have come, DHR and Preservation Alliance, it would not be bad for the commission to meet with them first so they can straighten out what they really know. Then see if they are willing to come to a public meeting. Maura asked if they should see if they could get them to come to the next meeting. Julie said that would be great and easier. They could always call a special meeting. Pam said in the meantime, they can send out the postcards. Julie asked what they wanted on the website for people to go to, just that one guideline document. Pam said yes because that is plenty to read. John said that you want them to look at the survey too. He thinks it is kind of important this is

included. They can see the map then and where they are. They can find their own property there too. Julie asked if they were including the whole area that was surveyed. John said yes, that whole 200 page package Julie said yes let's put it up there. Maura said they will have to organize it so it is all in one chunk. She feels it would be helpful to have it in one window all together. John thinks this would be ideal. Julie will talk to someone about the website and how to work in a survey monkey and links. John asked what they do between now and the next meeting. Pam said that they all need to familiarize themselves with the document that she thought she knew, but clearly she does not. Maura thinks they should talk to all of the Planning Board and see if they can get anywhere. Jay agrees that they should speak with the whole board. Julie said that is next week and John said they are not going to get there next week. Maura suggested that John be placed on an agenda that has space for the commission and see what the answer is. John said he thinks late July or early August. He said that would give them the time they need to put together a presentation. Julie said this would also allow time to talk to DHR and the Preservation Alliance. John said he will start this in motion at least and in the meantime, we will hold off on the postcard. Julie said they should hold off on the postcard until they are sure of what they are talking about. The members agreed. John said that he thinks they made some progress. They would be moving too fast without being prepared. He thinks the Planning Board process would give them a better understanding because they will be asked a lot of questions about it. He thinks they have the ability to put it before the Planning Board and he does not think they can say no to us. If it is citizen backed, they have to listen. Julie said they also need to check with the Town Planner. One of the things in the manual is that it recommends something in the Master Plan about wanting to do this. Julie then asked who would like to call Dave Sharples. She would be happy to do it. John said that Julie may be better received. John said he would be happy to try and get some input from the DHR and the Preservation Alliance. He said he needs to review the document again and get a little more detail and at least put some talking points together that can be brought to the Planning Board. Julie said that somebody can think about the postcard so that if this goes forward, they can get on the production of it fairly fast and just what needs to be on it as far as the survey monkey and the link. Jay said that he will work on the postcard. John then asked if there were any other thoughts about this. Julie said she thinks they covered a lot of ground, which is good. John said at least they have some activities in place for the next meeting.

John and Pam went out to 7 Oak Street last week and they met Matt Hailey. He turned out not to be a bad guy. He was just a little uninformed. He expressed support and interest in this. John said he sent three photos to Julie and he needs a third person to go out and physically walk around the house. It is the barn behind the house, which is not a barn anymore, it is two apartments. John said he needs another person to tell him that they have looked at it and he can then write a letter to the Planning Department. Julie said she did go out and look at it and she agrees that the function is no longer apparent. John said this is not the current owner who did this. It happened quite some time ago. Maura said that property has seen quite a few owners over the last fifteen years and none of them seemed that keen on upkeep. Julie asked John if he wanted an email from her and he said he did. Jay asked John if they were just going to demo the building and there is nothing else going on that property. John said there is and he

does not know what yet. John said he has quite a bit of property there and it goes back to the railroad tracks. He thinks he is planning on building another two units. He also mentioned putting a garage in between them.

Julie said she had one other thing. Thursday night is the HDC meeting on the IOKA proposal continuation. The drawings have not been posted on the meeting website and she can see that this gets done. If she gets it done, she will let the members know. Take a look at them and anyone out in the public watching, 7:00 on Thursday night. The HDC is meeting to discuss how it is being treated.

With no further business, Pam made a motion to adjourn. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary