

## Heritage Commission

November 17, 2020

### Draft Minutes

Members Present: John Merkle, Chairman, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Pam Gjetum, HDC Rep., Bill Campbell, Jay Myers, Vice Chair, Maura Fay, Treasurer, John Grueter, Planning Board Rep.

Call Meeting To Order: John Merkle, Chairman, called meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

Business: Approval of October 20, 2020 minutes. John asked the members if everyone was able to review these minutes. After one correction, Julie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Bill seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Next are the minutes from the October 28th Public Information Meeting. John thought they should talk about that meeting first and then decide on the approval of the minutes. Pam said that she was pleased that so many people came. She was worried that they would just be talking to each other. Julie said she thought they got some really good questions to set them up with the Planning Board. John Grueter said he thought this was more of a grass roots thing. He thought the neighborhood would have more input. They had some but it was not until the last couple of comments. Some were afraid of what the commission is trying to do. Bill said that he got that impression too. He thought maybe the next step would be to come up with something as to what they are thinking about as rules. He knows there really should be a group of citizens who get together and do this. There were several questions regarding how you are going to do that and they confuse it with the HDC. Maura said she thinks it would be helpful to put together a Q&A document and circulate it. A Lot of the resistance she could hear was that they thought this was like a Historic District and they are very concerned that it not be that. She suggested putting together a one pager answering some of the questions because maybe this would help alleviate some of those concerns. John Merkle said that he had a similar feeling. He thinks a couple of them on Cass Street were kind of misinformed. Julie then said that this is how she felt too. She said she thinks they were vague in what this was going to give the neighborhood. This is where she found most of the comments going. She thinks before they go to the Planning Board, they have another neighborhood meeting. Pam said that before they have another neighborhood meeting, they have to get some of these things cleared up. People are confused because it is a confused subject. Bill said that he thinks Maura's idea is a good one to put out a one page with answers for some of the things that came up. Maura said that because it was recorded, they could go back and view the questions. Jay said that he likes that idea and wanted to add they could describe it as sort of a learning process amongst ourselves. This is what they learned from the meeting. They were informed by the public and they tried to answer as many questions as they could. He said there is confusion about Historic District vs Heritage District. He thought towards the end they were able to see more of the forest through the trees.

It was just the details they were concerned about. Julie said looking at the handbook, it can get very restrictive and she was surprised when she first read it. There were things like outlining clothes lines and flag poles, things that are not of historical value. John Grueter asked where this idea originated in creating this district. Julie said they heard of through part of the State Preservation. Julie said she saw this as an opportunity for it to be an example. John Merkle then said that he is a little guilty of this because when they did the site walk with the people from the Division of Historical Resources, they were very excited about the prospects of surveying this part of town. He said it gives him and others who live in the neighborhood a better understanding and appreciation for the neighborhood. John Grueter said they should work with some of the neighbors who are in favor of it and educate them and have them help us spread the word. Maura said having lived in the neighborhood most of her life and it was not until she was on this commission that she recognized how under appreciated it was and what type of resources the neighborhood has. Wouldn't it be awful if someone sold their house and someone said this 1720 house is too much upkeep and then a modern colonial was built. That would be awful. They do not have a way for this to happen at this point and it would be a huge loss to the town. Julie said that was a point that was made at the very end that someone could come in and build a cinder block building there is no say. Maura said one of the unanswered questions for her that came from a person was whether contribution homes would be subject to whatever regulations the Planning Board comes up with. This is probably something the community board would get to decide and does the commission have a feeling one way or the other on this. Pam said that everyone is contributing even if you do not have a 1720 house. There are definitely things that you do not want out there. John Merkle said the contributing part of it is in a way a part of the form because the form is used to determine whether the area is eligible to be a Historic District. He thinks you would have to apply the same rules to the non contributing ones as you do to the contributing ones because they are part of the neighborhood. Jay said that one of the people who were part of the forum asked about a tax advantage. What is available to us to sweeten the deal for them to participate. He is equating this to a natural conservation area. A property owner owns a large farm and they turn their land over to the Conservation Commission so that it does not get developed any further. He thinks they receive some sort of incentive for them to do this. He says that it seems like they are talking about the same thing but are asking 131 different homeowners to think this way and creating a legacy on the town, but are asking them to do it for no incentive other than the good of their heart. Bill said that if a person sells their land to the Conservation Commission or if the commission had money to buy it. They had a \$3 million barn and they bought several properties, but they also put easements on people's properties where they own it but they do just as you say and make sure it is not developed. They can get compensation for that from the bond or the organization such as the Southeast Land Trust. John Merkle said that he thinks maybe they do not approve these minutes but they go back and take a look at the saved meeting and analyze this in more detail and generate some questions or talking points they can put together. Bill said the minutes are supposed to be recorded of what happened and that they would not be changing the minutes. They would just be getting ideas from the minutes. John Merkle said he agrees with Bill on this. He was more concerned about getting names right and Bill said that was a couple of corrections that he had. He said this will not change the ideas. John Merkle said he is trying to develop the next step. He likes the idea of putting together a summary of questions and

trying to address some of the concerns that were expressed at the meeting and some clarifications. He said if they had to have another public meeting, he would be in favor of that if they can get people to stay motivated. Maura said it might help to move the conversation along if they have some ready answers to some of the more general questions that people had and then be able to be specific. Then talk about whether there is any interest in participating in the Advisory Board and developing the guidelines. Bill asked if it would make sense to do Maura's idea and Jay's developing those things and then maybe asking at a second meeting if there was a group that would be interested in helping to form some ideas before they go to the Planning Board. He does not see a big rush to get this out of the way before Christmas. Maura said she could put together a shared document and she could start with some questions from the meeting and put together an answer and try to make the document as clear as possible. She said she likes the idea of having another meeting and asking whether there would be folks who would be interested in moving it forward or not. Julie said she had a question on the logistics of doing this. Do they still have the database of people that they sent this out to somewhere and maybe Barbara would have it. Maura said she assumes so. Jay said that he has it. Julie said that billing wise this would be coming out of the Heritage Fund. John Merkle said that they could take the people who participated that are documented and engage them to spread the word. Julie said that is how it is supposed to work. Maura said she will start the document and she will share the link with everybody so anyone can contribute. After some corrections to the minutes, Bill made a motion to accept minutes as amended. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Next is the discussion of the Black Heritage Pocket Park. Maura said there were no updates. They are currently in the process of scheduling a new meeting time and they are looking at the week of November 30th. Hopefully by the next meeting, she will have something to report.

John said he had a request from Sally Ward from the Conservation Commission. They have a sub committee for Rayes Barn and she wanted to know if the Heritage Commission would be receptive to putting a member on that committee. It is something that would not happen right away because they would have to change their bylaws. Bill said that he is on that committee already. Julie said she is on there too as a liaison. She does not vote, but she gets to hear what everyone gets to say. John Merkle then said that they do not need to do anything at this point. Julie said she did not think so.

Bill wanted to let the commission know that the house on High Street that could not be demolished went on the market and it is under agreement. The buyer will be going in front of the HDC and he has some great ideas. John Merkle said it is a nice outcome.

Other Business: Julie said she always forgets to have John put this on the agenda this time of year. It is budget time and it has been proposed to just keep the commission's budget the same. She said she thinks this year would be an HDC year because they trade off years and they will get the CLG application time and grant time. The letter of intent she thought was due on the 20th, but it is November 20, 2021 so they have plenty of time to decide. She said they had talked about this a little before about doing a survey. A survey is totally funded by the CLG grant funds from the State. She said they had talked about doing a survey in the Jadey Hill area

because that shows a very different aspect of how an area of town gets developed but then she went back and looked at the map presentation and really it is the Front Street, Court Street and Elliot Street area that is the next developed area. Do they want to go for a survey and if that is an area they should prioritize. It is already a Historic District for the most part, but not the side streets. Maura said she thinks it makes sense to move towards that area. John Merkle said they should try and get another sidewalk tour in the springtime. Julie said she thinks it is a pretty good area because half of the work is already done. She would not mind making it a larger area going out to Pine Street and going back to Court Street. She said she could put a letter of intent in if that is what the commission wants to try and they have a year to think about it. Pam said to do the letter of intent. Julie said the concern came up because the HDC wanted to do a window workshop which the Conservation Commission has done a couple of years ago.

John asked all members if they were comfortable meeting at this time and everyone is. Next meeting will be December 15/20 at 12:30 pm. Julie said after that she might be tied up on Tuesdays at that time depending on how the House moves.

With no further business, John entertained a motion to adjourn. Julie said so moved. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick  
Recording Secretary