

## Heritage Commission

January 19, 2021

### Final Minutes

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

John Merkle, Chairman, called meeting to order at 12:30 pm via ZOOM.

Business: Approval of December 15, 2020. John asked the members if they had a chance to read the December minutes. Everyone had and after several changes, Bill made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

John then moved onto the Black Heritage Pocket Park update. Maura said she had a little bit to report. She was able to meet with them last week but they have not come to the point where they want to have a public forum like we did a couple of months ago like we did for our idea. She said they have worked out a date she believes to be February 19th which is a Friday evening was the one floated so it would not interfere with any other town meeting. This would be an opportunity for some folks from committee to speak to whoever in the public might be interested in knowing what the tentative plans are. This is the latest report she has. She thinks they have made some final revisions to a flyer that is probably going to get posted next week. It should be coming out soon and she will forward to everyone when she finds it. Julie asked if they had picked a location or was that what would be talked about at the public session. Maura said she thinks that is part of what is going to be talked about.

Next on the agenda is the continued discussion of the Park/Cass Streets Heritage Neighborhood. John asked if there were any comments on this. Maura said she was going to double check the document they worked on the last time because there were a couple of questions at the end that they wanted to finish up. The question they were wondering about is whether property owners could receive some sort of tax advantage. She said she feels the general theme was is there any kind of tax advantage or financial support of any kind for homes within the district in any way. Julie said she has not found any. She said there may be some small grants depending on what the project is. She thinks the short answer to this is no, but she will keep looking. John asked what the commission's next steps would be. Jay said he does not think this relates to the next step but goes back to the question of what benefit is available for folks living in the neighborhood. He said the tax question was one thing, but it seemed like a lot of the participants talked about what they would get out of it. He said he thinks moving forward, we want to try and put this up front and sort of outline in some way the types of benefits they would receive. Pam said that she does not think she can push that the folks would get a huge financial advantage because they won't. They might get a few more points if they were applying to say one of the state agencies to do something to their house. They certainly

will not get a big tax break. Julie said at the state level, there is no tax advantage. Bill said isn't it more that they would have a little bit more control over their neighborhood. Pam said that is exactly what you get. Maura said she thinks it would be helpful to talk out that angle. If there truly is not any kind of financial incentive, they could talk about the idea that they chose to live in the neighborhood because they like how it feels. This would ensure it would continue that way without any massive changes. Bill asked if the commission was going to have another public hearing. Julie said she thinks that was the expectation. Maura asked if they were planning to send the Q&A document out to everybody and have that be an announcement of the next public hearing. John said he thought that was what the goal was. Maura asked if they want to have the focus of this next meeting be more of people who may be interested in being on the initial steering committee. John said he thinks this should be an objective. He also said he still thinks it would be worth pursuing by putting something on the website so they could get to this. It would be a general destination point to find out what is going on. He said as each month goes by, they can add it to and answer some more questions and provide some feedback that could be used at the meetings. Bob from Exeter TV said he would be glad to help set this up on the town site. John thanked Bob because he said it would be helpful. Maura said she thinks this would be a really nice option to have. Maura asked if they should pick a date for a public forum. John asked how long to get this out into the public's hands. Pam asked if they would be doing a mass mailing again and Maura said yes because that is what they had talked about. Bill said they want the date of the meeting on the mass mailing. John asked what time of day they wanted to have this meeting. Julie said she thinks it would have to be the evening. Everyone agreed. Maura asked the members how they felt about having the meeting on a Friday evening. The tentative date would be Friday February 26th. Jay said the last meeting was maybe on a Thursday and Maura said it was on a weekday evening. Pam said if it is the 3rd Thursday, that is the HDC Meeting. Bill said that Wednesdays are good. Maura then asked Bob from Exeter TV if Wednesdays were typically free. He said on the 24th there are no meetings and he said the last one was on a Wednesday. Jay said he would prefer something other than a Friday if they want to maximize participation. They decided on Wednesday February 24th at 6:30 pm. Maura asked Bob if it would be possible as they get the letter finalized for them to put something about like look at the Heritage Website or give them an updated document that they could post there to have people reference so they can give comments if they cannot make it. Bob said sure thing and he could get that up within a day. Maura said she would be willing to meet with Bob to get that set up. She thinks she can get the Q&A document finalized by the weekend and put an introductory paragraph that says something like please join us at our public meeting and here is what we hope to talk about. She then asked the members to take a look at it on Sunday or Monday and let her know if they have any thoughts. She then said what makes more sense is that she will send an email out when she is done and send the link again. John then said that it sounds like they are making some progress. Julie said in order to be really prepared for this presentation, should each of the members take a chapter or two of the handbook to be experts at. Maura said it is probably a good idea. John said it would be and he would assign this. John then said they will be meeting on February 16th for their regular meeting and they can finalize things for the following week's presentation.

With no further business, John entertained a motion to adjourn and Bill said so moved. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Herrick  
Recording Secretary