

Heritage Commission
June 15, 2022
Final Minutes

Members Present: Jay Myers, Chairman, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Bill Campbell, Maura Fay, Treasurer

Call Meeting to Order: Jay Myers, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:15 pm in the Wheelwright Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Business: Approval of tMay 18, 2022 minutes. After review and one change, Bill made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Next on the agenda is the election of officers. Jay said it is time to elect officers for the next fiscal year. Jay said he would like to complete his term as Chairman, either this term or carry it through until his overall Heritage Commission term is up.

Jay then said that we need more folks and have an opportunity to recruit or inform the public and hopefully increase our numbers.

Julie said she thinks that without Pam and John being here, we should not go ahead. Bill then made a motion to table the elections until the next meeting. Julie seconded. All were in favor and motion approved.

Jay said in terms of the opportunity presented to us to put forward a public service announcement, Pam is requesting our reply by June 22nd.

Julie said she is interested in trying to get all the boards and commissions for participation. Unfortunately during the closure, emergency order, when we could do remote meetings, we had higher participation. More people were available because they had child care and this cannot be done any longer. It has to be done in person now and this presents a limitation on who feels comfortable, even having a monthly meeting. She said the Select Board put this on as one of the goals to do an all boards meeting or a volunteer fair, which Julie had done a number of years ago and she said it worked somewhat.

One of the things that was suggested by Exeter TV is to do PSAs. Julie said most of them are recommended to be done by the Chair and she is willing to work with the Chair. Julie thinks it is more effective when it comes from a volunteer. She thinks the commission should definitely do this and then it is just a matter of scripting and timing when available.

Jay said that he is for this as well. He said he understood that the Chair was to be the point person for this and his interest for tonight was to see if there were others who wanted to participate and then also learn a little bit more of what the Select Board was promoting for this.

Julie said what was found with the HC, HDC, Planning Board and Zoning Board also is that people don't know what they don't know and are afraid that they do not know enough. What we have not been able to promote enough are the learning tools we have. Julie said the HDC's new Guidelines are very informative and she thinks anyone can pick them up and feel comfortable making a decision. Julie also feels that some of it carries over to this commission. We need to show the knowledge base that is available to members of the committee.

Jay asked what the length of a PSA would be. Julie said it would be around two or three minutes. Julie said you go through the mission statements and then you talk about what you do at a typical meeting. Julie said for our case, it is the Demolition Review because it is most often active.

Julie said one of the things we might want to decide as a commission is whether we want to meet every month. Julie said we are really supposed to be educating the public, but we do not have the support to do that.

Julie said one of the things we have not been able to talk about as a commission is making a Master Plan for what we want to do and how we want to do something educational. We have not been able to find more money for preservation. We have been very successful with the grants we have gotten before for the different surveys. Julie said she thinks by doing the PSA, we can talk about those positive aspects we have available to us and how we can work with boards or other commissions or even with the Historical Society and museum with people who just know their history.

Julie thinks as a commission, we need to make our own individual Master Plan because we are not really mentioned in the Town Master Plan at all. In fact, the staffing still says TBD. Julie said this is a drawback. There are people here who are really good at organizing an event, advertising an event, but we do not have access to them.

Julie said this year The Division of Historical Resources has offered a mini grant for membership to the National Association of Preservation Commissions. The membership to the group is national. They have a newsletter and so many learning opportunities. This mini grant from the DHR is to pay for the membership dues. Julie then said that she has applied for this. If we get the membership, then everyone on the commission gets the emails instead of just me.

Julie said further on into the Certified Local Government, we had talked about doing either re-surveying the downtown because it has changed so much. It was recommended to me by a Preservation Planner that we not touch that because it just opens the whole thing again for reinterpretation. Julie said she agreed with that.

Julie said the other thing we had talked about here and at the HDC was doing a mini survey of buildings in historic districts that just show the character defining features. This would be an educational tool that would be good for both bodies. The Town Planner had an example from

his previous position in another town. It was encouraged by the Division of Historical Resources, although not probably for the money we would need.

Jay said going back to the PSA, he will notify Pam of our interest and they will not be happening until January.

Maura wondered if it would be worthwhile for us just as a group or if the town wants to develop a flier that says, Town Boards and Committees are looking for volunteers and put it in community rooms in the 55 plus communities where folks may be new to town or even retired.

Julie said we do get a lot of volunteers from people who have newly moved to Exeter for retirement.

Jay said the next agenda item is the summary draft and essentially it is to memorialize the work that we did. To put onto paper the effort that went into and behind the Heritage Neighborhood District. If this ever moves forward, it is a blueprint design. Jay had passed out this draft to all members present. Jay said he is asking the members to help fill in the details around it.

Julie thinks this is a really good idea because when we started talking about it, I contacted The Division of Historical Resources about the manual that is so dense and they told her they do not think any town has been successful in doing this.

Next on the agenda is updates to the Exeter Black Heritage Pocket Park. Maura said she is seeking out new information. She said she reached out to Renee who was the one who originally started the idea. Renee told Maura one of the barriers is the uncertainty around Swasey. Julie said the Town Council is still going back and forth about this and nothing has been decided yet. Maura said she is hoping to get a meeting started to get interest back.

Other Business: FYI, there is a workshop for cemetery old stone resetting and proper cleaning taking place on June 26th in Kensington from 4 pm to 6 pm at Kensington's Upper Yard by John Lord of the NH Old Graveyard Association covering resetting of fallen or skewed cemetery stones, in addition to proper cleaning methods for old slate and marble stones.

With no further business, Jay called for a motion to adjourn. Bill said so moved. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary