

Heritage Commission

April 19, 2023

Draft Minutes

Members Present: Jay Myers, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, John Merkle, Vice Chair, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep; via ZOOM

Call Meeting to Order: Jay Myers, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

New Business: Approval of the minutes from the March 15th meeting. Julie said there were not enough members present to approve the minutes because Pam was not at the last meeting so the minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

Next is the Demolition Review Committee updates – 170 Epping Road. Pam and John were able to go and visit the property. Pam said it is a lovely little house, but it really is not historic because it was built sometime in the 50s. It us to be very lovely but now when you step out the front door, you are right in the construction zone.

Julie said the defining features we are looking for there were not there. John said it is a standalone building and there is not another building in sight of it.

Pam said the woman who was living there was telling me how sad they were because it was so lovely and they would sit on the back porch and watch all the birds and animals.

John said he sent a letter of approval and photographs to the Building Inspector last week.

The next item on the agenda is updates from representatives from the Select Board, Planning Board and Historic District Commission.

Pam said there is nothing from the Historic District Commission because we did not meet last month and nothing has happened.

Julie said there is nothing from the Select Board but she said the Office of Planning and Development is holding their Spring Conference on the 29th.

It will have a panel to discuss preservation topics. There are two of us from across the state that are coordinating this and she is really looking forward to this. Julie said this will be held all day. This will be all ZOOM.

Julie said she is putting together a power point about any concerns the Heritage Commission has or getting volunteers. I am hoping to hear of some success stories from other towns. What I understand from the Division of Historical Resources that it is a common problem amongst all of the 200 plus town trying to find volunteers for both commissions, the HDC and the Heritage Commission.

Jay stated that next is some conversation about the direction of the Heritage Commission. I received today a resignation letter from Maura. Jay said that this ends his term. I am not sure if I need to officially resign as I am not intending to continue. This does not leave many available for the election of new officers which would take place at this time.

Julie said this would actually take place next month because your term is ending now and there is still time between now and the end of the month that we might have a meeting, so you are still Chair.

Jay said that makes sense and Julie said she would like to emphasize that Pam, myself and John Gruder are members because we are associated with other boards and that leaves John Merkle and Bill Campbell as the only volunteers on the commission.

Julie said that one of the questions she is wondering about and it could not happen until next year, is whether or not the Heritage Commission and the HDC should unite.

Jay thanked Julie for the clarity. He was not sure how the process went as far as new officers and the timing of it. Jay said that Julie was accurate in that John Merkle and Bill Campbell are really the only two remaining that could possibly take a position. The public service announcement plug and for those listening or watching, this is a great opportunity to join a wonderful committee and do some good work in the town.

Jay said if this committee gets merged with the HDC is a conversation for another day.

John asked Julie how this merge would happen. Julie said that both the HC and HDC were established by votes at a town meeting. She said she does not know of any town that has done this merge. Julie said she thinks the commission needs more information before a decision can be made. Jay said that he agrees.

Pam said unless we get some volunteers, I don't see what we can do except merge or else disband and I would hate to do that.

Julie said those are our two options. Members of the Heritage Commission would be acting as a regulatory body if we combine with the HDC. It would not be like a combined meeting. It would just be a commission meeting and have a Heritage Sub-committee.

Jay said his mind goes back to the RSA that is the outline admission of what the Heritage Commission does. What happens to that? It just goes silent until there is enough people to fill that commission?

Julie said the Heritage Commission's focus is to educate and preserve in a fashion. We have a fund that can go towards preservation of a building or a piece of property. The Historic District does not have that functionality. This is an aspect we will have to learn about.

Next is to talk about some business that carried over from the last meeting discussion related to the CLG Grant.

Julie said she put a Letter of Intent to the Division of Historical Resources for the survey area. When we discussed it, we sort of crossed from Court Street, Pine Street, and Front Street area and then we were also interested in the area across the railroad tracks toward the southwest. Julie said in conversation was that we should find a smaller area because the projects are so numerous this year that it is much more competitive. They did respond that we are welcome to submit an application. They did recommend that we speak to a Preservation Planner for the smaller area we want to do. Julie said this will change the amount of money I asked for because I just put down \$25,000 because that is what we did for the Park Street area. What we are looking at now is a much smaller area and it will not be that much. This is what the DHR is looking for, a smaller area or take two years to do it. Julie said she would rather do the smaller area.

Jay said, in terms of a smaller area does anything need to be discussed or decided on tonight?

Julie said she would really like to get an estimate from a Preservation Planner. We have one that we have used often and we only need to get one quote from somebody. Julie said she would like to use the Preservation Company that has done the surveys for us in the past.

John asked if the Preservation Company still active. I believe Lynn Monroe has retired. Pam said she retired from the company, but she is still very active in historical sites.

Pam asked if there was a particular place in town we like?

Jay said he is mixed when it comes to those areas. I feel like the Pine, Elliot, Grove Street is a good area.

John said he likes that one because it touches Front Street district.

Pam said I like that too and I think it actually would have more history in it than the Mill area. Somebody mentioned Lincoln Street and Lincoln Street comes up again and again.

Jay said he thinks the Pine, Elliot, Grove is a nice choice. It is not necessarily changing. It is going to look that way for quite some time.

John said he will put together the meeting for next month and the commission will have to make some decisions without Jay and Maura.

John and Pam thanked Jay for his service.

With no further business, Jay called for a motion to adjourn. Pam said so moved and meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick

Recording Secretary