

Heritage Commission
Draft Minutes
June 17, 2026

Call Meeting to Order: Francoise Elise, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am in the Wheelwright Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members Present: Francoise Elise, Chair, Bill Campbell, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Dean Hubbard, Planning Board Rep.

First on the agenda is the review of the April 15th minutes. After review, Dean Hubbard made a motion to approve the minutes. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Next, Francoise the Chair passed out copies of the non-public meeting that was not posted to the members to read. Bill Campbell said, as far as these minutes go, I think they are good and I make a motion to accept them. Dean Hubbard seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were accepted.

Francoise, Chair, said the Heritage Commission nomination of the American Independence Museum for the NH Preservation Award had no meeting after this got awarded so I did not get a chance to report back. I attended the meeting and it was very nice.

Francoise said, your package should have contained this letter. This letter is from The Independent Archeological Counseling, LLC and was sent to us to make a decision on. This involves the

archeological site on the property for the EverSource transmission curadorias. Some excavation was done and there were some samples left behind. I don't think this is something that we should decide. Maybe the Conservation Commission?

Julie Gilman said, these kinds of inventories according to the federal and state laws, if any money from them is used then they have to go to an archeological site with you and this is the first time I have ever heard of someone finding something. We have never accepted anything and do not have the authority to even do that.

Dean Hubbard asked, is there somebody we can find who would be interested in looking at these?

Julie Gilman said, I thought of the Historical Society but they don't really accept things like that.

Dean Hubbard said, what it comes down to is do we want to take the responsibility saying, we don't want these.

Julie Gilman said, it is interesting but I don't think there is anything we can do with a one month deadline.

Dean Hubbard made a motion to take no action about the letter. Julie Gilman seconded. Motion carries with one opposed not to take any action. Francoise, Chair, said the motion is amended to refer this to the Conservation Committee. Julie Gilman seconded. All were in favor and the amended motion was approved.

Francoise, Chair, said next is the Demolition Committee and we have not had anything to review.

Going on to the board updates. Is there anything going on? Julie said, nothing for the Select Board that she knows about. Dean Hubbard said there is nothing for the Planning Board. Julie said the HDC has not met in a long time but we have a case coming up. Julie then said, we are looking for volunteers for the HDC if you are out there watching.

Francoise, Chair, asked Bill Campbell if there was anything on the Fairpoint Park? Bill Campbell said he missed the last meeting. I think we are still working on contracts.

Julie Gilman said, there is supposed to be a member of the HDC on that committee and they have not assigned anybody. Is the fencing along the sidewalk included because I have an idea for that.

Bill Campbell said, we have talked about it. I am not sure what the permanent fencing would be.

Julie Gilman said, I am going to propose something to you folks as part of our heritage but I have not drawn it yet. Has anyone been to downtown Concord by the State House? Eagle Square? There are a set of brick buildings across from the State House. The gate of it is cast iron and it is three dimensional with some depth. We could do something that is the same shape and have it be very simple.

Francoise, Chair, said let's move on to Exeter's 250th Celebration Commission. The Exeter Heritage Commission did a great job listing and promoting all the activities that will be going on. If you go to Exeternh.gov/250cc, you will see a whole list of all the activities and a description. On July 9th, we have Swasey Park which will be a community picnic and we are going to be encouraging people to bring their own food and to shop at the Farmer's Market and local restaurants ahead of time. There will be a number of activities taking place at the picnic too. If you do pick up food from the Farmer's Market or a local restaurant, you will get a free 250th poster.

July 11th there will be an all wheels parade. This is for anybody with strollers, bikes, etc. It will start at 8 am and there will be decorations to decorate. The parade will start at 9 am and John Locke, who in his youth, came into Exeter on horseback and delivered the Declaration of Independence. He is going to lead the parade.

One of the things we are contributing to the 250th Celebration Year is to create the Heritage Rewards Program now known as the John Merkle Heritage Awards Program. The ceremony will take place on July 6th at 6:45 pm. John's children are very interested in coming. Julie volunteered to do the introduction.

Francoise, Chair, said next on the agenda is information and discussion on grant opportunities.

The Historical Society has obtained on loan the Minute Man Statue. It will be displayed at the Chester Historical Society on Saturdays from 10 am to 12 noon.

They also have a display they just finished on the year's past, how Exeter celebrated milestones events.

Julie Gilman said, one part of this is concentrating on what we did during the bicentennial. There is a great picture in the Town Report from 1976 that has the Selectmen all dressed up in colonial costumes signing something.

Francoise, Chair, asked Julie Gilman if she wanted to talk about the Independence Museum. Julie said that the museum has undergone a new rebranding and is now The American Independence Center. I encourage everyone to take a tour because it is really updated.

Julie Gilman then wanted to talk about the HDC project inventorying property starting at the east end of High Street and moving down. This is being done by consultants. This will be good information for demolition reviews because we will know who owns it or who built it. This is an ongoing project and we were just awarded \$25,000 to continue it.

With no further business, Francoise, Chair, made a motion to adjourn. Dean Hubbard said, so moved. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary