

**Stratham Heritage Commission
Meeting Minutes
Land Use Conference Room
October 10, 2018**

Present: Mike Houghton, Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Forrest Barker, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin.

Paul Deschaine arrived at approximately 8:20.

Guests: Peter and Dori Wiggin

Absent: David Canada

Convened: 7:05 PM by Nathan Merrill. Mr. Merrill asked Ms. Barker to be a voting member in Mr. Canada's absence.

Secretary's Report: Ms. Mitchell made a motion to approve the September 12 minutes as written. (Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Barker unanimous)

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Merrill reports no changes.

Committee Reports:

Planning Board: Mr. Houghton reported that he had recently attended a NH Municipal Association Seminar. Ms. Mitchell inquired about Mr. Perlowski's second building in the Town Center development and if there was an occupancy change from residential apartments to office space. Mr. Houghton confirmed.

Technical Review Committee: Mr. Houghton reported that Starbucks has a plan for building in the Staples Plaza to the right of Bootleggers between the traffic light and septic field. It was noted that the property owner of the plaza was highly interested in having Starbucks as a tenant due to the traffic that they draw in, but the drive-thru concept and architecture don't meet the Gateway conditions. Ms. Mitchell also reported that TRC members Jeff Hyland (landscape architect) and Tom House (building architect) have been contracted to create a visual plan of the Gateway corridor for a future presentation.

Demolition Review Committee: Nothing new to report.

Master Plan Steering Committee: A public workshop is being held on October 16th from 6:30-8:30

Old Business

Bartlett-Cushman House: Ms. Mitchell discussed the need for a baseline documentation for the preservation easement on the home as it will document the building's current

condition and provide guidance for future rehabilitation and reuse. This baseline documentation would also include a structural condition report which the town could share with future interested parties. Ms. Mitchell reminded the Commission that she has already completed a Character Defining Features Report for the property that will be used in developing the baseline documentation report. Ms. Mitchell made a motion that the Heritage Commission ask the Board of Selectmen for \$3,500.00 to hire a consultant to prepare the baseline documentation and structural conditions report (Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Hathaway, unanimous in favor with Mr. Houghton abstained due to his role as a Selectman).

Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Merrill recently showed the B-C house to Andrew Goddard (Copley Properties) and reported that he was genuinely interested in making a proposal for the property. He appeared to value the historic features and condition of the whole house and felt overall that the structure is in good shape. The rear ell could possibly be removed and reconstructed with a longer footprint but would remain connected to the barn. He envisions residential use in the house, and possible office use in the barn. His vision seemed compatible with the Heritage Commission's goals for the property and Ms. Mitchell will keep the communication open with a follow up email focused on the tax incentives available via RSA 79-E.

Ms. Mitchell inquired with Jennifer Goodman of NH Preservation Alliance on her experience, and the experience of her colleagues in other states, with selling properties with preservation easements. Ms. Goodman reported that salability is dependent on a host of factors independent of the easement and that there has never been a property that didn't sell. The importance of educating prospective buyers and real estate brokers was emphasized.

Portsmouth Avenue Survey: Ms. Barker reported that she has created a list joining together the property addresses in the survey with the owner names and mailing addresses from the Assessing Office. She has 84 total addresses and just a few more to get. Ms. Mitchell noted that there is a presentation at the Library on November 13 from 6 to 7:30 pm on Researching Your Old House by Andrew Cushing from the Preservation Alliance, and it would be a nice idea to use the mailing addresses to send out an invitation to this event. Ms. Barker says she has the addresses on an Excel spreadsheet that can be formatted to print address labels. The mailing would also include a cover letter with contacts, resources, and preservation tools.

Old Town Hall: The Board of Selectmen approved the RSA 79-E application for Mr. Perlowski at their October 1 meeting, granting nine years of partial tax relief for the Old Town Hall project. Mr. Perlowski and Ms. Mitchell compromised on a foundation paint color that appears to satisfy both. After a discussion on code exceptions on historic buildings, Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Canada will continue to assist with the fire suppression requirement negotiation at OTH.

Scamman Farm: Ms. Mitchell reported that she met with the Scammans to help them review the National Historic Register application that was put together by The Preservation Company. She also noted that the family had secured Aaron Sturgis, a

highly regarded timber framer and restoration carpenter, to rehabilitate the small 18th century English barn with the goal of keeping it a functioning part of the operating farm.

Veterans' Memorial Garden: Ms. Mitchell reported that we have a new Veterans Garden volunteer. Deb Bakke works in the town clerk's office. She is a Coast Guard veteran and is interested in redesigning the application form as well as taking over the job of verifying applications and coordinating with Seacoast Memorials for the engravings. Ms. Mitchell also reported that there are two current applicants outstanding, and Seacoast Memorial notified her that the name on the brick and name on monument will be completed by Veterans' Day, November 11.

Photo Archives: Mr. Merrill will coordinate next steps with Mr. Stuart to ensure a smooth transition of stewardship of the photo website.

Parker Cabin: Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Canada attended an October 5 meeting with representatives of NH Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NH Division of Historical Resources. Ms. Mitchell reported there was a lengthy discussion of the alternative proposed treatments of the Parker Cabin, noting the historic value and that it is eligible for the National Historic Register. With no funding available for maintenance of the structure, or to move the structure, NHF&G wants to proceed with demolition. They would create an educational exhibit at the Discovery Center to include some of the building elements. Ms. Mitchell noted that it would be of importance to the town that if the exhibit was ever to be disassembled that the town would have right of first refusal to take possession of the materials.

New Business

February Program: Possible topics were briefly discussed, including the recreational history of hunting and fishing along the Squamscott and Great Bay. Mr. Merrill had a contact that he thought would be a good speaker if we are interested in covering the topic as part of the Parker Cabin situation.

Captain Thomas Wiggin Cemetery: Ms. Mitchell reported that recently she and David Canada tried to access the site but found the trail overgrown and also blocked by several large downed trees. Ms. Dori Wiggin noted that yes there were some trees down and asserted that NH Fish and Game has jurisdiction over the trail and that is separate from the burial site. Ms. Wiggin is currently doing research to form a private family foundation with a corporate donor to fund maintenance of the burial site, but this would not include maintenance of the access trail. She has spoken with Glenn Normandeau, Director of NH Fish and Game, about establishing a MOA for the site to simplify right of access to and maintenance of the burial site, which is different than the management of the trail to the site. She reported that there has been no damage to the burial ground which is 60' by 120'. There is a little bit of shrub growth that will need to be addressed. Ms. Mitchell noted the historical importance to the community and the need for accessibility to the public. It was agreed that the town will reach out to Fish and Game

for trail access and maintenance. Ms. Wiggin will report back on her progress prior to or at our next meeting

Next Meeting: November 14, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the Land Use Conference Room.

Adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Tammy Hathaway
Secretary