

**STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Stratham Municipal Center**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 12, 2022**

Present: Nathan Merrill, Michael Houghton, Rebecca Mitchell, Forrest Barker, David Canada, Jeffrey Hyland, Tammy Hathaway

Absent: None

Called to order by Chair Merrill at 7:02 pm.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill distributed the September 14, 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Mitchell moved and Ms. Barker seconded that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker reported the following balances: Heritage Fund \$7,005.00, operating budget \$5,525.00, Heritage Preservation capital reserve Fund \$215,700.00.

**Board and Committee Reports**

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that the board is reviewing the proposed Stoney Brook Lane development. He expressed concern about the lack of any commercial component in the current proposal. Mr. Jim Flanagan, 249 Portsmouth Ave met with the board regarding the demolition application for his family's barn. Mr. Merrill reported that on October 14 he along with John Porter, Drew Bedard, Greg Blood, and property owner Jim Flanagan will meet to review the barn and determine what might be salvageable. After a discussion about the deteriorating condition of the house and how we might be able to be more proactive in future situations, Mr. Houghton will inquire with Town Administrator David Moore about what is within the town's ability to address deteriorating historic properties and demolition by neglect.

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported on the development of the Open Space Steering Committee and that the board will soon be voting on candidates. A NHDOT meeting is scheduled for October 13, regarding a proposed plan to replace two culverts on Squamscott Road. He noted that the 2023 budget season is fast approaching.

Demolition Review Committee: Mr. Merrill said the DRC has not met, but its members have been actively engaged with the 249 Portsmouth Avenue barn demolition application.

Heritage District Advisory Committee: The next meeting will be concerning the barn at 249 Portsmouth Ave. the Cornet Wiggin property, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Old Business

Historic Register Nominations: Mr. Merrill reported that the Preservation Company is close to completing the paperwork for the nomination of the Scammon Farm Historic District (including the conserved land owned by the Society for the Preservation of NH Forests) to the National Register of Historic Places.

Town-Wide Area Form: Mr. Merrill reported that Lisa Mausolf is making progress in completing the final draft, with assistance from Mr. Merrill and Ms. Mitchell on editing and gathering the remaining photographs needed.

Town Marker Project: Ms. Mitchell had nothing to report.

State Highway Marker: No progress to report.

Smyk Park History: Mr. Merrill has written a summary of the history of Smyk Park and noted it would be a good site for a future town historical marker. Ms. Mitchell suggested adding the date of the NH Profiles magazine article which highlighted the home.

Procedural Rules: Mr. Merrill presented the revised Procedural Rules that update the Funding section after reviewing them with Christiane McAllister, Town Finance Administrator. **Ms. Mitchell moved to accept the Procedural Rules as presented. Mr. Hyland seconded the motion and it passed with a unanimous vote.**

Neighborhood Heritage Districts: Mr. Merrill had nothing new to report

Old Family Cemeteries: Mr. Merrill reported that a meeting is scheduled at the Merrill cemetery (no direct relation) at 84 Bunker Hill Avenue on October 16. The site visit is organized by the Stratham Historical Society, and Glenn Knoblock author of “NH Cemeteries and Gravestones” will attend. Mr. Merrill invited any interested Commission member to attend.

Open Space Plan: Mr. Houghton reported that the board has a slate of candidates from the various boards and commissions that will soon be approved by the Select Board for formation of the Open Space Plan Steering Committee. **Mr. Canada moved to nominate Mr. Hyland to represent the Heritage Commission on the Open Space Plan Steering Committee. Ms. Barker seconded the nomination and it passed with a unanimous vote.**

Membership and meeting schedule: Mr. Merrill reported that Lucy Cushman is very interested in filling the vacant seat but has an existing commitment with meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The Commission agreed to an alternative day on either the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday or Thursday to accommodate Ms. Cushman’s schedule. Mr. Houghton will investigate meeting room space availability.

Potential preservation easement: Mr. Merrill reported that he and Mr. Canada had a productive meeting with the owners and representatives of the NH Preservation Alliance. The dialogue is ongoing.

### **New Business**

Public Program for 2023: After a discussion on possible topics for the February program a consensus was that a Stratham-specific topic would be most desirable. Mr. Merrill offered to present his research on “Down the King’s Great Highway”, the article written by Richard M. Scammon that was published in the 1899 Granite Monthly magazine. Mr. Hyland noted his brother-in-law may be able to help with scanning and re-digitizing the pictures to use in a PowerPoint presentation. Other possible topics discussed were homes and farms lost, historic properties listed on the state and national registers, and the Scammon Farm on River Road.

The draft budget for 2023: Mr. Merrill and Ms. Barker will begin to work on the 2023 budget. Ms. Mitchell suggested extra funds for the February program and Mr. Merrill noted that addressing the languishing town marker project will require funding to hire someone to complete the necessary research work.

Somersworth Historic Sites Map: Mr. Hyland shared the Somersworth historic interactive map on the Strafford Regional Planning Commission web page. Mr. Merrill noted that Rochester has a similar map, which was reportedly completed in-house with city staff. We intend to pursue something similar for Stratham after completion of the town-wide inventory. Mr. Merrill noted that Town Planner Mark Connors suggested teaming up with Rockingham Regional Planning Commission to tackle this project, which is included in our list of things to do in the Master Plan.

Eagle Scout Service Project: Mr. Houghton reported that Tyler Denton has proposed a 9/11 memorial by the flag pole at the fire station for his Eagle Scout Service project.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Hathaway, secretary