

Stratham Heritage Commission
Stratham Municipal Center – Hutton Room
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2021

Present: Nathan Merrill, David Canada, Forrest Barker, Rebecca Mitchell, Michael Houghton, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin

Absent: None

Convened: 7:15 PM

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill distributed the minutes of the December 9, 2020 meeting. Mr. Canada moved to accept the minutes; Ms. Mitchell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker reported the most recent financial figures: \$4,785.78 remaining of the 2020 operating budget and a balance of \$6,950.34 in the Heritage Fund.

Committee Reports

Planning Board: Mr. Canada, Planning Board representative to the commission, reported that the board, at its January 6 meeting, discussed the draft warrant article proposing a Route 33 Legacy Highway District. This was the first of two public hearings and Mr. Canada noted several deficiencies in the warrant article as currently drafted. The Commission discussed if it would be best to hold off on bringing this to Town Meeting until 2022. The discussion noted that while the draft language proposes suitable changes in allowed uses, that there is not enough protection from demolition of historically significant structures nor adequate incentive for preservation. Ms. Mitchell voiced her concern that the window allowances were more suitable to a commercial district and do not reflect the goal of maintaining a residential feel in the district. She further noted that similarly the signage and lighting regulations should reflect the unique character of the district. Mr. Merrill agreed that there are missing items and room to tighten up the zoning amendments. He suggested that we would be remiss in not taking the time to engage with new the town planner, who has experience working with historic districts. It was also noted that the pandemic prevented efforts to conduct public outreach. Mr. Canada noted that there is a scheduled planning board public hearing on January 20, 2021 to review the proposed zoning amendments under consideration for this year's Town Meeting, and that the Board is seeking formal input from the Heritage Commission. *Ms. Mitchell said that in her view the commission should vote to support the Route 33 Legacy Highway Committee's Final Report, but urge the Planning Board to delay bringing the proposed zoning language to voters until Town Meeting 2022. Ms. Wiggin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Mr. Canada and Mr. Houghton abstaining.*

Technical Review Committee: No report

Demolition Review Committee: No report

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported that the board has been busy working on the 2021 budget and details of the new solid waste collection. He noted that the new Town Planner has been hired and that Andrea Lewy, Town Assessor, submitted her resignation in December 2020. The Town Elections in March will be held as usual but, for safety reasons, the Town Meeting will most likely be rescheduled to a date in the mid-May to mid-June time frame. He expects the meeting will be held outdoors similar to the 2020 meeting.

Correspondence

Mr. Merrill shared an email message from Dori Wiggin of the Wiggin Burial Ground Preservation Association, providing the annual update on the Wiggin cemetery and access trail.

Old Business

Historic Register Nominations:

Old Town Hall: Mr. Merrill reported that Mark Perlowski, owner of the Old Town Hall, has signed and submitted his permission for listing the building on the NH Register of Historic places. The State Historical Resources Council will meet later this month to consider nominations forwarded from the NH Division of Historical Resources.

River Road: After a review of the November 11, 2020 minutes and discussion of the Preservation Company proposal, *Ms. Mitchell made a motion to enter into a contract with The Preservation Company for the provided estimate of \$7,927.50 to prepare a State Register nomination form and determine eligibility for the National Register with funds coming from the 2021 budget and, if necessary, supplemented from the Heritage Preservation Fund or the Heritage Fund. Ms. Barker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.* Mr. Merrill will follow up with Lynne Monroe and David Moore to execute the contract.

Town-wide Survey: Ms. Mitchell said that she has not heard from Lisa Mausolf and will query her regarding the project.

Barn Easement renewal: Ms. Wiggin will submit a new application for the Wiggin barn at 65 Squamscott Rd.

Town Historic Marker Project: Nothing to report

State Highway Historic Marker Project: Ms. Mitchell reported that she is working on the Lane Homestead marker application, most recently compiling the required bibliography. The application also requires paper copies of source materials that support the statements

in the marker text. Mr. Houghton said she should use the municipal center copier instead of her home copier or Staples.

Membership: Nothing to report

Stratham Magazine February Issue: Ms. Mitchell has submitted an article promoting past February programs and how to access them via the website and library.

Website updates: Ms. Barker reported that Wiggin Memorial Library Director Lesley Kimball has informed her that by the end of the month the previous February programs will be uploaded with a YouTube link to the Heritage Commission's webpage.

New Business

House Bill #1104: Mr. Canada explained that the 2020 bill has been reintroduced as HB 164, sponsored by Representatives Patrick Abrami (R-Stratham) and Julie Gilman (D-Exeter). Information on a hearing date and the progress of the bill will be shared as available.

Adjourned: With a motion from Mr. Canada, seconded by Ms. Mitchell, all present voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Hathaway

Secretary