



# TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE • STRATHAM NH 03885

VOICE (603) 772-7391 • FAX (603) 775-0517

---

## STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION

Stratham Municipal Center

Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2022

Present: Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Michael Houghton, David Canada, Jeffrey Hyland, Lucy Cushman, Tammy Hathaway

Absent: Forrest Barker

Called to order by Chair Merrill at 7:00 pm.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill distributed the November 9, 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Hyland seconded the minutes be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Merrill noted that in the absence of Ms. Barker there was nothing to report.

### Board and Committee Reports

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that on 11/16/2022 the board reviewed two proposed solar energy projects. He also noted that the board is reviewing minimum setbacks in the Professional/Office (PRE) zone when properties that include a business use are adjacent to residential parcels. The current minimum setback in this case is 100 feet from the front property line, with the board considering reducing this to 20 feet.

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported that the board is pleased with the trend of the 2023 budgets with minor increases.

Demolition Review Committee: No meetings held.

Heritage District Advisory Committee: Mr. Hyland reported that the 11/16/22 meeting was canceled and he noted they should meet in January to work on a plan for outreach to the property owners within the district.

### Old Business

Historic Register Nominations: Mr. Merrill has not heard anything from the Preservation Company regarding the Scammon Farm national register nomination form. He will reach out to Kari Laprey and Ms. Mitchell will inquire of Lynne Monroe. Ms. Mitchell reported that Andrew Cushing is still working on the paperwork for the state register nomination of 200 Portsmouth Ave but will have it completed later than anticipated due to his current workload.

Town Marker Project: Mr. Merrill reported that he has been in communication with Town Administrator David Moore regarding developing an appropriate RFP.

State Highway Marker: Ms. Mitchell had nothing to report.

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

Cemeteries: Mr. Merrill inquired of Ms. Cushman regarding monitoring private cemeteries in town as she is a current trustee of the town's cemeteries. Ms. Cushman noted that it is not currently a responsibility of the town to maintain the old private burying grounds. Mr. Merrill opened a discussion on a goal from the town-wide survey to document all of the old cemeteries on private property in town. He expressed concern that some of the old graveyards on private land have become overgrown and could be lost to history if not better documented soon. He added that they could be geo-located and added to the statewide inventory kept on the NH Old Graveyard Associations' website. Ms. Cushman agreed that this would be a project she would be interested in working on. She used to travel around town with her late father to place flags on the veterans' graves, so she knows where most of these sites are located.

Potential preservation easement: Mr. Merrill reported that the property owners would like to meet again after the holidays are over.

## **New Business**

Public Program for 2023: Mr. Merrill has reserved the Morgera community room for 2/17/23 and a snow date of 2/24/23 for the program. He created a first draft of his PowerPoint program on "Down the King's Great Highway; a Sketch of Stratham," an article written by Richard M. Scammon and published in the March 1899 *Granite Monthly* magazine. Mr. Hyland agreed to review the program with Mr. Merrill to see if the clarity of the pictures could be improved. Ms. Mitchell will work with Mr. Merrill on publicizing the event with posters and flyers and noted that an article has been submitted for Stroll magazine's January edition. Mr. Merrill plans to spread announcements about the program through the Select Board newsletter, library newsletter, and Stratham Historical Society emails.

The draft budget for 2023: Mr. Merrill reported the 2023 budget has been submitted and there is nothing new to update.

Historic Property Stabilization Program: Mr. Merrill asked Mr. Houghton to report on the Select Board perspective of the proposed assessment grant and revolving loan program. Mr. Houghton noted that the board had positive support for the initiative with the challenge being to come up with a mechanism to make it work within the legal framework currently available to us. Town Counsel's view is that without statewide enabling legislation, the town can't loan money to private property owners without obtaining something tangible in return. It is too late to solicit new legislation in the coming 2023 legislative session. After a discussion, Mr. Houghton suggested a separate work session to focus on options with the Town Counsel, Select Board, and Heritage Commission. All were in agreement and Mr. Houghton will follow up with Mr. Moore to coordinate a date and time. Mr. Merrill inquired about the assessment grant portion of the program and Mr. Houghton indicated that it could likely proceed because it does not entail lending money out.

### **New Business:**

Town Report: Mr. Merrill distributed a draft annual summary of the commission's activities that he wrote for the Town Report and all agreed to submit it as written.

Select Board request for use of HPF funds: Mr. Merrill reported that he, Mr. Canada, and Drew Bedard recently met at the Stratham Historical Society building to review needed maintenance and for Mr. Bedard to write an assessment report for the work. The cost of the assessment report is \$450.00, and Mr. Moore suggested it be paid from the Heritage Preservation Fund. After discussion about the purpose of the HPF being intended for capital-scale projects and acquisitions, **Mr. Canada motioned to pay for the \$450.00 assessment report out of the 2022 operating budget; Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

NH Preservation Alliance: Mr. Merrill distributed a recent copy of their newsletter and noted that he had renewed the town's yearly membership.

Town-Wide Area Form: Mr. Merrill distributed the completed 240-page survey report to all members and asked that they review it and report back with any errors. The commission all agreed that the document was well-written and will be extremely helpful with future endeavors. Mr. Merrill shared that Lisa Mausolf had expressed that she had gone way over budget on the project, so he asked her to submit a supplemental invoice, which is for \$1,000.00. After a discussion on the project, in which Mr. Merrill and Ms. Mitchell explained that they had asked Lisa to add significant additional content to the report from its original first draft, **Mr. Canada motioned to pay the supplemental invoice to Lisa Mausolf for \$1,000.00 out of the 2022 operating budget; Mr. Hyland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Map of historic properties: Mr. Merrill shared a preliminary draft map created by Town Planner Mark Connors showing all the historic homes with push pin icons superimposed on aerial photo-based tax maps. All were in agreement that it is a good concept but hard to read with the push pin icons and may be easier to interpret if the appropriate properties

were shaded by tax map lot number instead, with different colors referring to the age of the structures.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Hathaway, secretary