

**Stratham Heritage Commission  
Stratham Municipal Center – Hutton Room  
Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2020**

Present: Nathan Merrill, David Canada, Forrest Barker, Rebecca Mitchell

Absent: Michael Houghton, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin

Convened: 7:05 PM

Chair Merrill confirmed Ms. Barker's appointment by the Select Board to voting membership.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill distributed the minutes of the November 11, 2020 meeting. Mr. Canada moved to accept the minutes with a couple of editing marks removed. Ms. Barker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Merrill reported that he submitted the invoice for \$246 from Exeter Monument Works to the Town Finance Administrator. Ms. Barker reported the most recent financial figures: \$4,886 remaining on the 2020 operating budget and a balance of \$6,949 in the Heritage Fund.

**Committee Reports**

Planning Board: Mr. Canada, Planning Board representative to the commission, reported that on December 2 the board held a workshop on zoning changes that will be on the town's 2021 warrant, including changes to the regulations in the Gateway and Town Center districts. Mr. Merrill reported that he had communicated to Planning Board Chair Tom House his concern that, with the abolishment of the Gateway designated outer district, agricultural uses within the Gateway will be jeopardized. He noted that as the town lacks an agricultural commission the Heritage Commission takes an active interest in protecting agriculture in Stratham. Those present concurred that it would be worthwhile for Mr. Merrill to follow up on the matter with the Planning Board.

Technical Review Committee: No meeting

Demolition Review Committee: Mr. Merrill reported that the committee, with all members present, met on November 20 to review a demolition application for structures at 46 Lovell Road. After viewing the exterior of the structures and discussing the property the committee agreed unanimously that there was no need for further investigation of the property's potential historical significance and the application could return to the Building/Code Enforcement Officer without further delay.

Select Board: No report

## **Old Business**

### Historic Register Nominations:

**Old Town Hall:** Mr. Merrill noted that the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources had determined the Old Town Hall eligible for the New Hampshire Register of Historic Places based on the updated inventory of the building. Ms. Mitchell noted that in reviewing the changes to the building following its purchase, the DHR had said that the building merits listing for its role in Stratham's community life and government, but that the changes to building materials disqualified it for architectural merit. The State Historical Resources Council will review the DHR recommendation at its next meeting. Mr. Merrill said he will ensure that the building owner, Mark Perlowski, submits his signed permission for the Old Town Hall listing to the state register.

**River Road:** Ms. Mitchell said there is nothing new to report.

**Town-wide Survey:** Ms. Mitchell said that she has not heard whether Lisa Mausolf will commence photography this month, and will query her regarding progress.

**Barn Easement renewal:** Nothing to report

**Town Historic Marker Project:** Nothing to report

**State Highway Historic Marker Project:** Ms. Mitchell reported that the NH Department of Transportation has put the program on hold and the NH DHR is, for the time being, not accepting applications. However, she was informed that because we have begun the process the DHR would keep that in mind when reviewing the waitlist after the program resumes. The DHR has formed an advisory marker committee to develop a "list of priorities or suggested topics for marker applicants to consider." The stated goal is to "be proactive about working with communities to recognize underrepresented subjects and places around NH." With that in mind Ms. Mitchell said she will tailor the proposed text to emphasize the importance of Lane's diaries and records to our knowledge of everyday life in 18<sup>th</sup> century New Hampshire.

**Membership:** Mr. Merrill reported that he had approached a good prospect for membership but the candidate said that upon consideration he could not take on commission membership at this time.

**Stratham Magazine February Issue:** Mr. Merrill reported that he will work with Ms. Barker who has agreed to write an article about the Route 33 Legacy Highway Ad Hoc Committee and the proposed zoning changes that are being recommended as a result of the committee's work. Ms. Mitchell will write a brief 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 told her that there should be no difficulty converting the DVDs of past programs

to a format compatible with online posting and sharing. Ms. Barker will follow up with Ms. Kimball to ensure completion prior to publicizing it.

## **New Business**

Annual Report: Mr. Merrill handed out copies of his draft report. There were a few suggestions of edits that would slightly shorten the length. The consensus of those present was that Mr. Merrill should go ahead and submit the report after making those edits he thinks appropriate.

Wiggin Cemetery and Access Trail: Mr. Canada reported that he had recently visited the Wiggin cemetery and access trail at Sandy Point. He circulated two photographs: one showed the trail as reasonably accessible but the other showed shrubby growth in the cemetery itself, seeming to indicate that no maintenance work was done in the past growing season. Mr. Canada pointed out that the cemetery itself was, although of concern, never intended to be within our jurisdiction but solely for the Wiggin family to deal with. Mr. Merrill said that he would communicate the commission's concern to Dori Wiggin.

Memorial Minute for Wallace Stuart: Mr. Canada proposed, and all present concurred, that these minutes should reflect the commission's deep sadness over the passing of former member Wallace Stuart on November 28, 2020. Wally was a good friend to us all, a strong advocate for historic preservation in Stratham, and a wise voice in our deliberations. His photographs, both from earlier in his life and during his time with the commission, are a valuable legacy for future historians of Stratham.

With a motion from Mr. Canada, seconded by Ms. Barker, all present voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:02.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Mitchell  
Secretary pro tem