

Stratham Heritage Commission
Meeting Minutes
Land Use Conference Room
January 9, 2019

Present: David Canada, Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Mike Houghton, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin

Absent: Forrest Barker

Convened: 7:03 PM by Chairman Canada.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill made a motion to approve the December 12, 2018 minutes as presented. (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell, unanimous in favor)

Treasurer's Report: Nothing to report in the absence of Ms. Barker

Committee Reports:

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that at the December 19, 2018 meeting elevation changes to the building next to the old town hall were approved. The Planning Board also received a citizen's petition to see if the Town will amend the zoning map to include 170 Portsmouth Avenue in the Town Center District.. The board declined to approve the petition. Mr. Houghton noted that the Starbucks proposal for Parkman Brook Plaza has had significant design improvements. Lindt Chocolate has submitted conceptual changes for several additions including a seven-story mixing tower.

Technical Review Committee: Ms. Mitchell noted the committee has not met but Jeff Hyland has emailed the committee an updated digital copy of the visualization display to show the Gateway design possibilities.

Demolition Review Committee: Ms. Mitchell contacted Mr. Kevin Hatch owner of 291 Portsmouth Avenue and received permission to show the barn to Mr. David Ryng, owner of 271 Portsmouth Avenue, who is interested in salvaging some features of the house interior.. She also noted that the foundation stones on the home are monumental and hoped that they would be saved in place but hasn't heard back from Mr. Hatch. She has contacted Mr. Arron Sturgis of Preservation Timber Framing, sending him some photos of the house and barn and asking if he would spread the word that the barn's frame and elements of the house will be available for salvage if the owner proceeds with demolition. Mr. Houghton questioned how to be more proactive in saving some of the historic buildings on Portsmouth Avenue before demolition became the final option. Mr. Merrill said that tackling this issue is beyond the scope and skills of the Heritage Commission alone, and suggested that it was time for the Planning Board and Heritage Commission to have a joint meeting to consider changes in zoning ordinances to address the challenges that Mr. Houghton identified and that have been troubling the commission for some time. Mr. Merrill said that this matter will likely be discussed at the January 14 open

meeting to historical resources in the master plan with representatives from the consulting firm Horsley Witten

Master Plan Steering Committee: The Steering Committee will meeting on the evening of January 14. At noon on the same day there will be a meeting, as previously mentioned to discuss historical resources with the Master Plan consultants.

Old Business

Bartlett-Cushman House: Mr. Houghton reported that the required two public hearings before a sale can be completed, per RSA 41:14a, are scheduled for January, 14 & 28, 2019, and that there have not been any changes or objections to the Preservation Easement proposed for the property. Ms. Mitchell noted that she expects that the baseline documentation and conditions report to go with the preservation easement will be completed by January 28, 2019. It is expected that the time for both the closing on the house and the preservation easement will be simultaneous.

Smyk house: The home has been demolished. Ms. Mitchell asked that the narrative written by Lorraine Merrill, in which she summarized the how the Flynn family shared their home with the community, go to the Historical Society along with the photographs, floor plans and other archival materials that the commission collected. Mr. Merrill has drafted a dedication letter for the Town Report in memory of Walter and Mary Smyk for the Selectmen to consider. The commission agreed that they would also like to see a note of appreciation for retiring Town Administrator Mr. Paul Deschaine and Chief of Police Mr. John Scippa as well as a memorial letter for Mr. Terry Barnes, recently deceased. Mr. Houghton will share this at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Portsmouth Avenue Survey: The survey is still being reviewed. Ms. Barker shared with Mr. Merrill and Ms. Mitchell the mailing list of Portsmouth Avenue property owners she developed.

Scamman Farm: Ms. Mitchell reported that on December 13, 2018 the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources notified the Scammans, the Town, and the Commission that the National Historic Register nomination will be considered by the State Historical Resources Council at its meeting on January 28, 2019. After the expected approval by the Council the nomination will go to the National Park Service for consideration. Ms. Mitchell noted that the actual value of the work for the historical survey from The Preservation Company of Kensington NH was \$17,368.00, reflecting the many hours of work that went into preparing the nomination, but the bill to the Town was for \$5,000 as agreed upon.

Veterans' Memorial Garden: Ms. Mitchell reported that there are no new applications. Debbie Bakie is working on a revised application form, and will share the draft with Ms. Andrea Lewy and Mr. Jim Joseph in the Town's Assessing Department.. Ms. Mitchell noted that the lights in the Memorial Garden are not functioning, and Mr. Houghton replied that there are problems with the wiring in many areas of the park that need to be addressed.

Old Town Hall: Mr. Canada will meet with Mr. Perlowski to establish a time for the open house. Mr. Merrill has salvaged three window frames, which will be refurbished as information board

frames and hung in the Municipal Center. Ms. Mitchell will select a paint color to propose for the frames. Ms. Mitchell reported that she had discussed with the NH Division of Historical Resources the best way to proceed with the nomination of the Old Town Hall to the NH State Register of Historic Places. She was told that with the addendum of new photographs and a narrative describing the changes made to the building since the initial application the nomination would go back to the State Historical Resources Council for their April meeting.

Photo Archives: Mr. Merrill reported that former Commission member Wallace Stuart's computer is not working, but that most photos are accessible from previous projects, reports and Facebook.

February Program: The program on "The Life and Times of Portsmouth Avenue" will be held on 2/8/19 with a snow date of 2/15/19. Ms. Mitchell has submitted an article for the January issue of the Stratham Magazine about the program. After a brief discussion Mr. Merrill made a motion that a \$200.00 stipend, plus travel costs, be given to Ms. Lisa Mausolf for her presentation. (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell, unanimous in favor) Ms. Mitchell will draft an invitation letter to send to interested parties using the mailing list of property owners on Portsmouth Avenue. A discussion on ideas of an image to use on a poster to distribute, and what was needed to prepare for the day of the program ensued. Important things includes, contacting Exeter TV for video recording, reserving a projector and screen from the library, and access to the microphone from Mr. John Sapienza.

Expansion of RSA 79E area: Commission members discussed the importance of keeping this topic on the agenda for future dialog to help ensure the economic viability and sustainability of historic resources both east and south of the town center. Possible incentives for property owners to refurbish historic homes, rather than demolish them, need to be developed. Also the need to continue dialog with Mr. Tavis Austin, and with the Planning Board was discussed.

Budget: Mr. Canada noted that there is a \$50,000.00 request being presented at Town Meeting to go into the Heritage Preservation Fund. He will present the this and the proposed budget to the Budget Committee.

New Business

House Bill 384: Mr. Canada reviewed House Bill 384 which is relative to access to historic burial sites on state owned land. The hearing for this bill is on January 22, 2019. Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Canada will attend to represent the Heritage Commission in support of this legislation. Mr. Merrill made a motion to officially support House Bill 384 on January 22, 2019 with Mr. Canada and Ms. Mitchell representing the Heritage Commission along with any other members attending. (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell, unanimous in favor)

Annual report to Town: After a review of the Heritage Commission's draft report for the Annual Town Report, Mr. Merrill made a motion to submit the two-page report, rather than the one page

version, to enable it to provide additional information to the Town. (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell, unanimous in favor) Note: Perhaps Mr. Houghton abstained?

Spring Preservation Conference: Ms. Mitchell announced that the NH Preservation Alliance spring Conference is on May 31, 2019 in Littleton NH.

Next Meeting: February 13, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Land Use Conference Room

Adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Tammy Hathaway
Secretary