



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

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STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES January 9, 2024 Stratham Municipal Center

Present: Nathan Merrill, Drew Bedard, Forrest Barker, Lucy Cushman, Jeff Hyland, David Canada, Mike Houghton

Absent: None

Chair Merrill called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Secretary's Report: Dave Canada made a motion to approve the December 12, 2023 minutes as presented. Jeff Hyland seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Forrest Barker reported the account balances:

Operating Budget: 12/31/2023 expended \$1,928.00 / unspent balance at year end \$3,722.00.

Heritage Fund: 12/31/2023 balance at year end: \$7,287.65.

Heritage Preservation Capital Reserve Fund: balance at end of Nov 2023: \$262,935.40.

Correspondence: Mr. Merrill received an email from the N.H. Division of Historical Resources stating that their internal rules for the state historical marker process had expired, and DHR needs to make new rules before they can proceed with evaluating the applications. Mr. Merrill followed up requesting a timeline and heard back that the rules expired in 2010 and they will take up to a year to develop new ones with the legislature. DHR assured us that our application was complete and in the queue for evaluation once the rulemaking process is complete.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that the Gallant property (80 and 80R Winnicutt Road) preliminary consultation for residential subdivision will return to the Planning Board, but since the applicants have postponed multiple times, they need to renotify the abutters. On the topic of proposed 2024 zoning amendments, the Planning Board tightened up the language regarding open space requirements in cluster developments. Ms. Cushman asked if the Commission's input from our last meeting was incorporated into the proposed 2024 zoning amendments, and

Mr. Canada replied yes. Mr. Merrill said that the Heritage Commission appreciates the Planning Board's responsiveness to our concerns.

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported that the Select Board is preparing for this year's town-wide revaluation of property assessments, and has hired a new assessing contractor. The Budget Advisory Commission is meeting this month. Mr. Houghton said that funding will likely be requested for improvements at Stevens Park.

Demolition Review Committee: Has not met.

Heritage District Advisory Committee and Open Space Plan Steering Committee: Have not met.

OLD BUSINESS

Brown/Gifford project: Mr. Merrill reported that Lisa Mausolf is still working on the project.

Town marker project: No updates

Veterans Memorial Garden: Lucy Cushman checked for old application records with Town Clerk Deb Bakie, but she said that Ms. Mitchell has them. Mr. Merrill didn't think that was the case and he will follow up. Mr. Merrill asked Mr. Houghton to let David Moore know that the VMG monument lights are out again.

Cemeteries: No updates.

Historic house placards: The contact Mr. Hyland was going to reach out to in R.I. passed away and his business was sold to Hand Painted Wooden Signs in N.J., (the same vendor Mr. Merrill spoke with last month). Mr. Canada will speak with Skip Stearns at the Stratham Historical Society to discuss the possibility of jointly supporting this project by splitting the cost of the house placards three ways (SHC, SHS, and property owners each paying 1/3 of the cost for the signs, which are estimated to be around \$225 each, with shipping). Hand Painted Wooden Signs provided some promotional materials, which Mr. Merrill will bring to our next meeting. There are approximately 130 eligible 18th and 19th century properties, according to the town-wide inventory.

Historic/scenic streets and Historic resources mapping project: Tabled until the next meeting when Mark Connors will attend.

2024 public program: Mr. Merrill and Jeff Hyland are continuing to work on the program. Exeter Public Access TV will film the program. Mr. Merrill will also put a notice in the Select Board newsletter, SHS newsletter, and Wiggin Memorial Library newsletter.

Mr. Hyland reported that his wife Donna Jensen has agreed to serve as a volunteer to maintain our social media presence on Facebook. The group offered its sincere appreciation for her willingness to assist with our public outreach efforts. Mr. Merrill will provide Ms. Jensen with images and text to promote the February program.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual monitoring report -- OTH: Mr. Canada met with Building Inspector Will Dinsmore and Mark Perlowski (property owner), to complete the annual easement monitoring report for the Old Town Hall. Mr. Canada thought everything looked good. An area of water intrusion through the foundation that had been noted in the previous monitoring visit was fixed. They are still working on writing the formal report.

Mr. Hyland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. Dave Canada seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Forrest Barker
Secretary