

Stratham Heritage Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Land Use Conference Room  
February 12, 2020

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

Absent: Rebecca Mitchell

Convened: 7:00 PM

Secretary's Report: Mr. Canada distributed the minutes of the January 8, 2020 meeting. Ms. Wiggin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Merrill, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker had nothing to report

**Committee Reports**

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that at the January 15 Planning Board meeting, David Ryng and Alex Dardinski were appointed to the Route 33 Legacy Highway Ad-Hoc Committee.

Technical Review Committee: Mr. Canada shared an email from Ms. Mitchell regarding the February 4, 2020 Technical Review Committee meeting in which she notes the review of a proposed site plan for a Chipotle restaurant in the corner of the Staples parking lot across from Starbucks. This proposed site plan has yet to be submitted to the planning board.

Demolition Review Committee: Nothing to report.

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported that the budget proposals have not been published. The Board has decided that the Historic Inventory Survey will not be included in the proposed Capital Improvement budget, but may be financed through the Heritage Preservation Fund. Mr. Merrill noted that although disappointed with this decision he accepts the proposal for this year but hopes it is not precedent setting as the Heritage Preservation Fund was not intended for planning tools.

**Old Business**

February Program: Mr. Merrill reported that 21 people attended the program. He felt that the relatively low turnout was due to snowy weather and a conflict with the televised NH Democratic Debate. Mr. Merrill gathered all the feedback surveys on the program and has mailed them to the New Hampshire Humanities Council.

Rezoning Route 33: Ms. Barker and Mr. Merrill attended the first Route 33 Legacy Highway Ad Hoc Committee meeting, where they worked on establishing goals for the Committee. These goals include preserving historic structures and view sheds from the traffic circle to the Greenland town line. Mr. Merrill shared a map he and Town Planner Tavis Austin created to identify the 33 historically significant properties on that route. Mr. Merrill also noted a discussion on providing incentives for preserving these properties that may include expanded home occupations and modified office business.

HB 1104: Mr. Canada reported that he and Ms. Mitchell attended the recent legislative hearing and felt the bill was well received by the committee (House Municipal and County Government). He noted that Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director of the NH Preservation Alliance, also attended.

Stratham Hill Park Historical Markers (Varsity Wireless funded): Mr. Canada reported that the invoice for half of the prototype to develop the historical marker by Phineas Graphics has been paid (\$300.00).

Report on CC Easement: Mr. Canada noted that he has spoken with Bill McCarthy, Conservation Commission chairman, regarding the easement matter discussed at the December non-public session. Mr. McCarthy will further the discussion at the next CC meeting.

Expansion of RSA 79-E: This statute pertains to tax relief incentives for improvements to historic structures. The Town has previously adopted the provisions of the statute for structures with the PRE and TC districts. Mr. Houghton reported that there is a warrant article to expand the availability of this program to any structure within Town so long as it has been designated by State or Federal agencies as historic.

Photo project: Mr. Merrill reported he is working with Wallace Stuart on transferring photos from Mr. Stuart's flicker account onto a portable hard drive provided by Town Administrator David Moore. Mr. Houghton suggested that if necessary, Mr. Merrill could access the town's technical resources. Mr. Merrill replied he felt he was making progress and thanked Mr. Houghton for the offer.

Town report: Mr. Canada reported that the Commission was being limited to a one-page report in the 2019 Town Report. He has abbreviated the previously adopted report and distributed a copy to members.

Old Town Hall window project: Mr. Canada noted that the OTH window frames salvaged by Mr. Merrill had been refurbished and were now installed as a bookcase and a bulletin board in the Town Hall lobby. A discussion ensued on the change of placement of the bulletin board from the original location envisioned by the Heritage Commission as well as the change from 3 bulletin boards to one such board plus a bookcase. Mr. Houghton explained that there had been concern that the window hoods would protrude too far into the hallway and be too intrusive. The Heritage Commission expressed gratitude and thanks to Public Works Director Nate Mears and his crew for the installation and a good

job on the rehabilitation. . Mr. Merrill stated that plaques are needed to inform the community of the history of these frames and will write a description to be used. Mr. Canada will coordinate ordering and placing the plaques.

Voter Information night: Mr. Canada noted that on March 3, 2020 there is an information night at the Wiggin Memorial Library. Mr. Houghton said he will be there to answer any questions pertaining to the warrant article regarding RSA 79-E and any questions on the Commission's proposed budget.

Heritage Preservation Fund: Mr. Houghton suggested creating language regarding the rationale behind the Heritage Preservation Fund for purposes of answering questions at the annual town meeting. This document will also be posted on the Town's website. Mr. Merrill will draft this document for review at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

Renewal of NHPA membership: Mr. Merrill made a motion to renew the Commission's membership with the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wiggin and passed unanimously.

LCHIP workshop: Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Barker are planning on attending the workshop on February 28,2020. Mr. Canada made a motion to authorize the Commission to reimburse any associated expenses which was seconded by Mr. Merrill. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammy Hathaway