

**Stratham Heritage Commission
Stratham Municipal Center – Hutton Room
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2022**

Present: Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Michael Houghton, Forrest Barker, Tammy Hathaway

Absent: David Canada, Jeffrey Hyland

Convened: Chair Nathan Merrill convened the meeting at 7:00 pm

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill distributed the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting. Ms. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Houghton seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker reported that there were no updates on any of the fund balances. David Moore, Town Administrator, has suggested that a quarterly report on fund balances should suffice, unless there are any major projects to be addressed. After a brief discussion all agreed with having quarterly reports, with the caveat that we may need more timely updates in the last months of the year when we are doing budget planning. Ms. Barker inquired on submitting the first timesheet from Sydney Barrington, the UNH graduate student working on research for the town marker project. Mr. Merrill said the Commission agreed at our last meeting to utilize the Varsity Wireless mitigation fund for her work, since it pertains to Stratham Hill Park. Mr. Houghton noted that an invoice with her work hours, rate of pay, and total amount owed should be submitted to Mr. Moore.

Committee Reports

Planning Board: Mr. Houghton reported in the absence of Mr. Canada, that the site plan has been approved for Optima dermatology at 23 Portsmouth Ave. Mr. Houghton noted he attended a site walk, regarding a proposed cluster development of 80 homes at the end of Stoney Brook Lane which has been scaled back from the original plan of 200 homes.

Demolition Review Committee: Has not met.

Select Board: Mr. Houghton reported that the board has been focused on town meeting and elections. Municipal elections will be held at Stratham Memorial School, and Town Meeting will be held at Cooperative Middle School. Mr. Houghton stated that he was pleased with the town's proposed budget which has a minimal increase.

Correspondence: Mr. Merrill reported that David Moore contacted the town of Rochester regarding their interactive map of historic sites, and it was done in-house by city staff. Mr. Merrill will contact the Rockingham Planning Commission to see if they can offer support on this project after the town-wide survey is complete.

Old Business

Historic register nomination: Mr. Merrill reported that Lynn Monroe will be finished with the River Road National Register nomination by the end of the month. Nothing to report on the State Register nomination for 200 Portsmouth Ave.

Town-Wide Area Form: Ms. Mitchell gave an update on the status of this project with Lisa Mausolf. Ms. Mausolf requests guidance regarding the level of detail we desire in documenting the houses built between 1950 – 1972 (the 50-year cut-off), and whether we want substantial additions to historic structures noted specifically. Mr. Merrill stated that he felt it would be most important to include more detailed documentation of the town's early subdivisions that are over 50 years old, including the original site plans, rather than trying to fully document every individual house that is 50-70 years old. There was consensus that we should still make note of every house over 50 years old, but that less detailed documentation is generally needed for each individual structure. Ms. Mausolf will have a preliminary draft of the survey ready for review in early March. Ms. Mitchell suggested recruiting a small number of long-time resident volunteers outside of the Heritage Commission membership to help review the draft document.

Town Marker Project: Ms. Mitchell reported that she will be meeting with Sydney Barrington at the Historical Society next week, and will be making an appointment for them to do some research at the Portsmouth Athenaeum in the coming weeks.

State Marker Project: No updates.

Preservation Easement Stewardship: Mr. Merrill reported that he shared the *Stratham Heritage Commission Preservation Easement Annual Monitoring Report* document with David Moore and Jim Marchese, the new Building Inspector / Code Enforcement Officer, in preparation for the annual site inspection scheduled on 2/11/22 with Mark Perlowski, owner of the Old Town Hall.

Demolition review ordinance: No update yet due to staffing turnover. Mr. Houghton will follow up with Jim Marchese.

Farms Project: Mr. Merrill reported that he inquired with Lynn Monroe on an estimate of the book recently done in the town of Newington which covers the history of farming in their town. Ms. Monroe gave a ballpark estimate of \$25,000.00 for research and documentation prep work, depending on how much is uncovered and documented in the town-wide survey that's already in progress. Printing and graphic design costs would be an additional ~\$10,000 depending on the number of copies ordered, if a published book is desired. Ms. Barker suggested that we could consider a strictly online format with interactive maps, photos, and text. Mr. Merrill suggested waiting to proceed further on this project until the town wide survey is completed, and all agreed.

RSA 79-D: Mr. Merrill has received and reviewed a revised model of the town's RSA 79-D barn easement, and he has forwarded it to Beverly Thomas at the NH Preservation

Alliance for her review. He feels the latest draft is vastly improved and that it's near completion.

New Business

Photo Archives: Mr. Merrill reported that the photos have been uploaded to the town's server. Mr. Moore requests our guidance on how we want the photos organized and accessed on the website. Mr. Merrill explained that they are straight jpeg files without any kind of captions, so the file name of each photo is the identifier for each image, and he organized them in folders for each property. Some are demo review houses, some are historic register properties, some are just images of structures that are likely of historic significance. He feels that the photos are mostly of value as archival information for future research – he doesn't see them as something intended for promotion to the public or frequent use by the public. More thought and discussion is needed so that we can respond to Mr. Moore appropriately. Ms. Mitchell suggested that she could reach out to Cynthia Swank, a retired archivist, for her advice.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Hathaway, secretary