



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE STRATHAM NH 03885

VOICE (603) 772-7391 FAX (603) 775-0517

STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes Stratham Municipal Center March 21, 2023

Present: Nathan Merrill, David Canada, Michael Houghton, Rebecca Mitchell, Lucy Cushman, Forrest Barker

Absent: Jeffrey Hyland and Tammy Hathaway

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM

REGULAR BUSINESS

Secretary's Report

Dave Canada made a motion to approve the February minutes and Nate Merrill seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Forrest Barker said there was nothing to report.

Rebecca Mitchell said there were two donations from the Heritage Commission Public event; \$11 in cash and a check for \$25 which will be deposited in the Heritage Fund. Ms. Mitchell also had an invoice from Top Copy for copies of the *Granite Monthly* for \$150, to be paid from the Operating budget.

Planning

Mark Connors presented a review of the Town's GIS maps and their potential uses to the Commission. He explained how heritage-related information could be added. As an example demonstration, he had photos and data pre-loaded for the Kenniston Tavern. The map has layers that the Commission could use to add historical information and photos from the townwide survey. Mr. Connors showed some maps from the town of Amherst website. They worked with Nashua Regional Planning Commission to create their GIS-based maps of resident interest.

Mike Houghton said the billboard page on the Amherst site was the easiest to use. Mr. Conners asked the Commission how they wanted to organize photos and pdfs. Nate Merrill suggested we start with a few houses to see how it goes. Dave Canada recommended starting with houses on the National Register. Nate Merrill said he will work on that with Mr. Conners. Rebecca Mitchell said demolition permit applications and DRC meeting notes could also be included where applicable.

Next, Mr. Merrill raised the issue of outlining historic streets. Lucy Cushman mentioned that the last time River Road was considered for designation as a scenic road, it was rejected by the townspeople. The commission talked about potentially designating the town's original roads without making it regulatory, simply as a planning tool. Mr. Merrill also mentioned that maybe public opinion has changed and people might like to protect their road-facing stonewalls and street trees with formal designations. Mr. Conners departed the meeting at approximately 8:05.

Correspondence

Nate Merrill received an email from Karen Richard saying that his and Forrest Barker's terms are expiring this month. They both filled out the forms to reapply. Mike Houghton said it will be voted on at the next Select Board meeting.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning Board

Dave Canada said there was not much to report except that they are building a bank in the Staples Plaza parking lot. Concerns were raised about limited parking in the lot already. Nate Merrill asked if Drew Goddard had been back to the Board yet with his project at the former Hannah Wingate house / Congregational parsonage. Mr. Canada said Mr. Goddard has not yet returned to the Board.

Select Board

Mike Houghton reported that the most recent Select Board meetings were focused on Town Meeting preparations.

Demolition Review Committee

DRC has not met.

Heritage District Advisory Committee

Jeff Hyland reported via email that a meeting has been set for early- to mid- April.

Open Space Plan Steering Committee

Mike Houghton said that the committee has formed, and a meeting schedule is being developed.

OLD BUSINESS

Historic register nominations:

21-23-25 River Road

Nate Merrill said there was no answer yet on the River Road nomination. The NH Division of Historical Resources staff had feedback for the Preservation Company on the application, so it won't be going in front of the committee until later in the spring.

200 Portsmouth Ave.

Rebecca Mitchell is working on getting a deadline with Andrew Cushing for her nomination.

State marker project

Mr. Merrill and Ms. Mitchell discussed the advantages and disadvantages of having State funding or private funding for the Lane Homestead marker. Ms. Mitchell said she thinks the Lane heirs would donate money for the project. However, Mr. Merrill reported that if the town funds the project it remains responsible for long-term maintenance whereas if the state funds the project, the NHDOT takes long-term ownership and responsibility of the sign. Ms. Mitchell said she would get a current cost estimate for the marker, and reach out to Bill Lane.

Town Marker Project

Ms. Mitchell said she had a good conversation with Richard Candee who worked on Portsmouth's historic markers with David Moore. He said the markers need to be image driven. He suggested we use photos or good artistic renditions. Ms. Mitchell will follow up with him.

Public program

Mr. Merrill said that the public program went well, and the 60+ chairs provided were full. The YouTube video is on the town website and has over 140 views already. Ms. Mitchell said she posted it on our Facebook page as well. Mr. Merrill said Skip Stearns emailed it out to the entire Historical Society membership, and David Moore included it in the most recent Select Board newsletter. Lucy Cushman said she received feedback that people didn't realize that it was about more than Portsmouth Avenue, and that they wished they went.

Veterans Memorial Garden

Ms. Mitchell said she received 4 applications for brick engravings. Last time she tried to remove a brick for engraving it was difficult, so she will reach out to Nate Mears at the DPW to coordinate brick removal. Nate Merrill brought up that Ms. Mitchell is moving this fall and the Commission will need someone to take over the Veterans Memorial Garden. Lucy Cushman said she is interested and would like to take responsibility. Ms. Mitchell suggested that they work on applications together in the fall.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Merrill said that David Moore reached out to him to write a cover letter for the town wide survey. It is now posted on our webpage.

Mr. Merrill also brought up that his neighbor at 85 College Road is in front of the Conservation Commission tomorrow night, trying to get a significant addition built on his home, which is in the Shoreland Protection District. Ms. Mitchell said this is something we are concerned about, given that this is an 18th century Wiggin house. The commission agreed, but there is little we can do about it.

ADJOURNMENT

Nate Merrill made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm. Dave Canada seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Forrest Barker
Secretary pro tem