

STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2016
7:00 pm
Land Use Conference Room

Members Present: Nathan Merrill, David Canada, Florence Wiggin, Wallace Stuart and Tammy Hathaway. Guests: Tracey McGrail until 7:30. Paul Deschaine at 8:15. Tavis Austin at 8:55.

Convened: 7:00 PM by Nathan Merrill, Chair filling in for Rebecca Mitchell. Alternate member Florence Wiggin took a voting position in Mitchell's absence. Alternate member Tammy Hathaway took a voting position in the absence of a Planning Board representative.

Minutes: The minutes of the December 9, 2015 meeting were approved. Minutes of a December 30, 2015 Quorum of the Heritage Commission were approved, and non-public minutes from this same meeting were also approved and remain sealed due to ongoing negotiations.

OLD BUSINESS:

Veteran's Garden: Volunteer Veteran's Garden coordinator Tracy McGrail joined the commission to review a request from a long time resident for an engraving on a monument that did not follow the current policy guidelines. Nate summarized the current policy which was approved by the commission in 2006: To be eligible for engraving on a monument you must be honorably discharged and be (or have been) a Stratham resident while serving in active duty during a time of declared war/conflict. All other veterans are eligible for an engraved brick in the garden. Selectmen's representative Canada stated that the Selectmen plan to review the policy and the resident's request, but they seek a recommendation from the Commission first. He said he would therefore not vote on the matter here. After discussion, **Wiggin made a motion to not change the Veteran's Garden policy or grant the requested exception. Stuart 2nd and all voted in favor, with Canada abstaining.**

300th Anniversary: John Dold met with the commission to review the schedule of events taking place in 2016 for the celebration. The theme for the 300th celebration is "inspired by the past, committed to the future" which will feature a play at CMS on April 30 and May 1, dinner and dance at Stratham Hill Park on June 25, followed by a parade on September 30.

Treasurer's Report: Merrill reported the 2016 budget request along with the Heritage Commission annual report were finished and ready to submit. Copies were distributed via email and at the meeting.

Lane Homestead and February Program: Merrill reported that Steven Mallory will take interior photographs of the Lane home for the slide show presentation, and will also be a speaker along with Rebecca Mitchell and Maggie Stier. Stuart reported on the publicity for the event and shared a list of media contact info.

Bartlett-Cushman House: Canada reported the RFP is now updated and being reviewed by real estate professional David Choate. The Selectmen hope to re-release the RFP soon, with application deadlines posted for mid-year. A discussion ensued on stabilizing the exterior the house this year with possibly some basic electrical, plumbing and insulation work inside to help make it more marketable next year. At a minimum, Selectmen plan to include funding in the 2016 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget for exterior carpentry repair and exterior painting. The possibility of including window work in the 2016 budget was also discussed. Interior work would be a potential discussion topic for 2017 if the RFP process does not turn up a viable applicant this year.

Agriculture: Merrill reported that the agriculture and agritourism definitions would be brought to Jan 20 planning board meeting for a final vote.

Barn Easements: Paul Deschaine reported to the commission that all the paperwork for the former Rollins barn on Stratham Heights Road had been completed and recorded. But the Decker barn easement on Emery's Lane awaits further action from the property owner. Assessor Andrea Lewy will be sending a follow-up written letter to remind the applicants that the April 1, 2016 tax assessment will not reflect an easement deduction unless all required paperwork is submitted to the town.

Planning Board & Technical Review Committee: Nothing new to report beyond prior discussion of the agriculture zoning effort.

Town Center: Paul Deschaine reported that a new RFP for the TC streetscape work will be issued and open for bidding on February 1. Merrill noted that the old town hall and adjacent Parker house (former Baptist parsonage) on Portsmouth Avenue are currently listed for sale and would be on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

NHPTV: Paul Deschaine reported that the program "Our Hometown" will begin doing interviews with town individuals for the show which will air in 2016. Mitchell has also been contacted by the producers, and she asks that commission members consider possible talking points for her interview, specifically in the realm of how historic preservation benefits the community. Members should email Mitchell or Merrill with any ideas for the program.

Town Planner: Paul Deschaine introduced Tavis Austin who has been hired for the town planner position. The commission looks forward to working together with him.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM

NEXT MEETING: February 10, 2016 at 7:00 pm

Submitted by:
Tammy Hathaway
Nathan Merrill