

Stratham Heritage Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Land Use Conference Room  
September 11, 2019

Present: Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Forrest Barker, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin

Absent: David Canada, Michael Houghton

Convened: 7:05 by Mr. Merrill acting Chair for Mr. Canada  
In the absence of Mr. Canada and Mr. Houghton the Chairman appointed Ms. Wiggin and Ms. Barker as voting members for the evening.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mitchell, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2019 meeting. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker reported that \$5,331 remains in the operating budget and the Heritage Fund stands at \$6,639. Ms. Mitchell will look into the payment of \$5,000.00 that should have been made by now to The Preservation Company. Mr. Merrill noted that David Moore informed him that the budget planning process is going to happen earlier this year. Budget and Capital Improvements Plan requests should be submitted in October. Mr. Merrill has informed Mr. Canada, and this will be on our next meeting agenda for further discussion.

**Committee Reports**

Planning Board: No report. Commission members are encouraged to attend the upcoming public hearing for the new Master Plan.

Technical Review Committee: No report

Demolition Review Committee: No report. Dana Dowling notified Mr. Canada that he has moved out of Stratham, so we will need to find a replacement to fill his seat. Ms. Mitchell noted that Mr. Canada should send Mr. Dowling a thank you letter for his years of service on the DRC.

Master Plan Steering Committee: Ms. Barker and Mr. Merrill attended the final meeting in July. The committee agreed that with approval from the Board of Selectmen they would continue to meet yearly to review the town's progress with implementing the master plan's goals. Mr. Merrill noted that one of the recommendations contained in the draft plan is that the town's historic streets should be identified; and this would be a relatively easy task for the Commission to accomplish this year. Ms. Mitchell mentioned that perhaps the first residential subdivisions in town (Crestview Drive and Williams Circle) would also be worthy of including in a list of heritage streets.

## **Old Business**

Veterans Garden engraving form: Ms. Mitchell reported that Ms. Bakie is working with her on updating the procedural rules / policy.

NH Historical Markers: Ms. Mitchell has prepared a first draft of text for the Lane Homestead sign. The commission reviewed the draft as it is limited to a specific number of lines and characters. Several suggestions were made for tightening up the draft and adding information on the historic sawmill. Ms. Mitchell also noted that a petition will need to be created and signed by 20 New Hampshire residents to submit with the application for the sign to the state Division of Historical Resources.

OTH window frames: Mr. Merrill and Mr. Canada met with Public Works Director Nate Mears to look at and measure the window frames which are currently stored in the Gifford barn. Mr. Merrill reported that they discussed the fact that the frames are too tall to fit vertically and serve effectively as bulletin boards. Mr. Canada suggested mounting them horizontally, or alternatively the frames could be cut and shortened for vertical installation. After discussion, measuring various locations in the hallway, and looking at where they would be placed, the consensus of the Commission is to mount all three frames vertically. Two frames will be fitted with corkboard material and mounted on the left of the main hallway as you enter the building. These should be cut to reduce their height, in order to fit approximately 2 cinderblocks up from the floor and 1 cinderblock down from the ceiling. These frames would be shorted from approximately 9'6" to 7'0" in overall height. The third window frame will be mounted in the main room in front of the Town Clerk's office, near the entrance to Rooms A/B. This frame will be used as a permanent or semi-permanent display case with items of historical interest – including the story of the frames and images of our Old Town Hall. Since it will be used as a display case rather than as a bulletin board, it can be kept its full (or nearly full) original height.

Stratham Hill Park info signs (Varsity Wireless): Ms. Mitchell suggested that we should look into hiring a graphics design company to come up with a cohesive design scheme for all of the various sites where we've discussed installing interpretive signs and markers. She will discuss further with David Moore.

February Program: Table for next meeting.

Inventory and ranking of historical resources: Mr. Merrill distributed a first draft titled "Stratham Heritage Commission Proposed Inventory and Ranking of Historical Resources". This spreadsheet could be used to evaluate properties to see if they would qualify if a future preservation revolving fund were in place. It could also be used as an evaluation tool by the Demolition Review Committee.

Old Town Hall: Mr. Merrill mentioned that we still need to pursue the state historic register listing, and a plaque to mount on the building, as Mr. Perlowski had agreed to in our preservation easement negotiations. Ms. Mitchell agreed to get back in touch with

NHDHR about the listing application. Mr. Merrill offered to get back in touch with Mr. Perlowski when appropriate.

### **New Business**

Discussion with Liz Hengen re: Historic Districts: Ms. Mitchell has emailed Ms. Hengen regarding historic districts and her response is that she would be happy to meet with the Commission on this topic. She also noted that survey data for the whole town is essential. Ms. Mitchell will get an estimate for a town wide survey to be completed in 2020 from Lisa Mausolf so that we can include the cost in our budget request. (It was noted that this will likely push back a year our intent to complete a National Register application for the Gifford Farm.) After a discussion, the consensus was that a special daytime Heritage Commission meeting with Ms. Hengen, the town planner and town administrator would be best.

### **Pending Items**

Rezoning of Route 33: Mr. Merrill suggested that he and Mr. Canada should meet with the town planner again after the Master Plan is completed, in order to begin next steps.

HB 384 (cemetery access): Mr. Merrill reported that he and Mr. Canada recently met with State Senator Tom Sherman, vice-chairman of the NH Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee that will be voting on HB 384 next. Mr. Sherman also met with Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wiggin. Mr. Merrill also noted that State Representative Pat Abrami has filed a proposed bill that addresses the demolition of town-owned property. His bill would allow for a citizens' petition to stop a proposed demolition of a town-owned structure until it could go before the next Town Meeting for a vote.

Scamman Farm: The National Register Plaque has arrived and has been mounted prominently on the house, facing the driveway. The rehabilitation work on the English barn is ongoing.

Cornet Thomas Wiggin House, 249 Portsmouth Avenue: There has been no response from any of the property owners to our letters sent last spring. The Commission agreed that a next step should be to consult with Shanti Wolph and David Moore. The collapsing roof on the barn provides a possible avenue for municipal action.

Next Meeting: October 9, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Land Use Conference Room

The meeting adjourned 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammy Hathaway