

Stratham Heritage Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Land Use Conference Room  
November 13, 2019

Present: David Canada, Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Forrest Barker, Tammy Hathaway

Absent: Michael Houghton

Guests: Dori Wiggin, Drew Bedard

Convened: 7:01 p.m.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mitchell, to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2019 meeting as presented. Approved unanimously.  
Mr. Merrill made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mitchell to approve the 10/29/19 meeting as presented. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Barker reported that there were no changes since the last meeting.

**Committee Reports**

Planning Board: Mr. Canada reported that the Robie Farm 22 cluster sub-division at 90 Winnicutt road was approved. Ms. Mitchell has submitted new photos for the cover of the Master Plan. Mr. Canada noted that the final draft has been printed and will be distributed to the Planning Board members to review.

Technical Review Committee: No report

Demolition Review Committee: The owner of 1 Crestview Drive has applied for a demolition permit. The DRC inspected the structure which had been heavily damaged by fire. The Committee determined that although the style of development was noteworthy as an example of 1960s architecture in Stratham's oldest subdivision, no further action was needed and accordingly no delay in issuing the permit was requested. Ms. Mitchell took documentary photographs of the exterior after the DRC meeting adjourned.

Master Plan Steering Committee: Nothing to report as the project is finished. Mr. Canada thanked Mr. Merrill and Ms. Barker for representing the Heritage Commission.

**Old Business**

Veterans Garden engraving form: Ms. Mitchell reported on the corrections Deborah Bakie has made to the amended Veterans' Memorial Garden engraving policy. Eligible veterans shall have served in "the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard or Military Reserves, and Merchant Marines under USC38 101(if service was during a time of war or conflict.)". Further discussion was had on adding a resident street address (as well as the mailing address) to the application form along with updating the spacing and font size.

Ms. Mitchell noted that NH RSA 72:28 refers to the Persian Gulf War and she will get an estimate for engraving this on the obelisk as there is currently no war delineated now. She will also double check that the Vietnam obelisk is correctly titled “Vietnam War” as opposed to “Vietnam Conflict” or some other officially sanctioned designation. Mr. Merrill made a motion to approve the changes and present them to the Select Board (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Barker, unanimous)

NH Historical Markers: Ms. Mitchell reported that the draft text for the Lane Family Homestead roadside sign is still being reviewed by the State.

Demolition Review Committee: Mr. Canada noted that there is currently a vacancy on the Committee and introduced Drew Bedard to the commission. Mr. Bedard is a preservation and restoration contractor who has recently moved to Stratham. After a discussion and overview of the Demolition Review Committee’ role Ms. Mitchell made a motion to appoint Mr. Bedard to the committee (Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Merrill, unanimous)

Stratham Hill Park info signs (Varsity Wireless): Ms. Mitchell has an appointment at Phineas Graphic Design in Portsmouth NH to discuss informational signage at the Park. She hopes to establish a format for historical signs that can be used both at Stratham Hill Park and future such signs in town.

February Program: Mr. Merrill will contact Stephen Taylor for more information on his new talk “New Hampshire Roads Taken – Or Not” and see if Mr. Taylor can include local examples in his talk. The date for the program is February 7, 2020 with a snow date of February 21, 2020.

Inventory and ranking of historical resources: Ms. Mitchell will contact Lisa Mausolf to get a firm proposal and time frame for the area survey of the town’s historical resources.

Old Town Hall: Ms. Mitchell noted she needs to update the inventory form and add new pictures for the State Historic Register Listing.

RSA 79-E: After a discussion on eligible historic structures, Mr. Canada suggested he and Town Planner Tavis Austin work with Town Administrator David Moore to clarify and amend the local ordinance on historic structures. Mr. Canada referred to the NH Municipal Report on the subject as being useful for guidance.

Rezoning Route 33: Mr. Merrill discussed the justifications for rezoning Route 33 which should be brought to the Planning Board’s attention when requesting that a committee be formed to study the issue. He outlined that there have been many previous conversations on this topic. Historic properties along this corridor are deteriorating because of neglect. Current zoning inhibits viable adaptive reuse of residential structures and traffic considerations reduce the desirability of residential use. He notes that the Master Plan anticipates such a study. The HC would like for a small subcommittee to be formed to work with the Town Planner to develop recommendations to the Planning Board. Such a committee might consist of two members from both the Planning Board and the Heritage Commission along with 2 or 3 members of the community at large. The committee’s objective would be to identify new uses within the district

which would blend with residential uses with an emphasis on incentives for the reuse of existing historic structures. Mr. Canada noted it would be good to engage historic property owners and abutters along with other interested citizens in town.

House Bill 384(cemetery access): Dori Wiggin reported that House Bill 384 was determined inexpedient to legislate by the NH Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee. They felt that this was a Stratham only problem and that it had been satisfied by the formation of the Wiggin Burial Ground Preservation Association. She informed the commission that John Boisvert, a board member of the Association and abutter to the burial site, was going to grant an easement protecting a corner of the cemetery which extends onto his property. The association is working on developing a “Friends of the Wiggin Burial Ground” network to build an educational component to the Association and to determine how best to deter treasure hunters from the site. The Stratham Historical Society will hold pertinent documents for the Association. A link on the Heritage Commission web page to the Stratham Historical society could be useful. Ms. Wiggin noted the association is currently working on clearing brush and establishing boundaries to the site and hopes to meet with NH Division of Historical Resources to review the status of a dormant archeological dig this winter.

### **New Business**

Next regular meeting: December 11, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Land Use Conference Room.

The meeting adjourned 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammy Hathaway