

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

Present: David Canada, Nathan Merrill, Rebecca Mitchell, Forrest Barker, Michael Houghton, Tammy Hathaway, Florence Wiggin

Guest: David Moore

Convened: 7:01 p.m.

Secretary's Report: Mr. Merrill made a motion, seconded by Ms. Barker, to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2019 meeting as presented. Approved unanimously.

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

Committee Reports

Planning Board: The Route 33 Legacy Highway Ad-hoc Committee has been formed with two members from the Planning Board, Tom House and Robert Roseen. Mr. Canada nominated Ms. Barker and Mr. Merrill to represent the Heritage Commission on the committee. Mr. Houghton inquired if there is a mission statement for the project which clearly states its purpose. Mr. Merrill suggested that the Master Plan is the guiding light and hopes that the Planning Board will set the guidelines for the Committee. The goal is to determine the best way to encourage private capital investments in existing structures along the corridor. Mr. Moore will follow up with Town Planner Tavis Austin, and have him write a definition of purpose for the Committee before the December 18 meeting. It was agreed that inviting affected property owners to join the committee is important.

Technical Review Committee: No report

Demolition Review Committee: No report

Old Business

February Program: Mr. Merrill reported that Stephen Taylor has agreed to give his new talk "New Hampshire Roads Taken – Or Not". Our application to the NH Humanities Council "Humanities to Go" program was approved, providing us with a \$200 mini-grant to help cover the cost of the speaker. Mr. Merrill will work with Mr. Taylor to include local examples in his talk. The date for the program is February 7, 2020 with a snow date of February 21, 2020. Ms. Mitchell will write a publicity article to promote the program.

Stratham Hill Park info signs (Varsity Wireless): Ms. Mitchell reported she had a productive meeting with Susan Hamilton of Phineas Graphic Design in Portsmouth NH. The scope of their

meeting was to design a template concentrating on establishing a brand image for future signs. The “brand” will include such features as the town seal, type face and color themes for the sign at the park and future historic informational signs throughout Town. An estimate of costs includes \$500-\$600 for the template of a 27” X 25” marker sign and approximately \$700 for the first sign; less for future signs using the same template. A lengthy discussion on topic themes, content, size, mounting options and placement of signs at the Park ensued. Mr. Moore suggested that Ms. Mitchell come to a Select Board meeting to discuss the project and to reach out to the Stratham Hill Park Association for feedback. Mr. Canada will research mounting options and costs.

RSA 79-E: Mr. Moore reported that Mr. Austin will write a warrant article to give the Select Board expanded authority to implement tax relief under the provisions of RSA 79-E. This would allow any structure within the Town deemed by designated state or federal agencies as historic to receive appropriate benefits under this program.

2020 budget requests revised: A discussion was had on the \$15,000 line item under capital improvement request for the town wide Area Form Survey. Mr. Merrill stated this will help identify and protect historic resources that are scattered throughout the town. Mr. Moore noted that it would be a useful tool when advocating for historic resources.

Veterans Garden engraving form: 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 using the same font as the other obelisks. Mr. Moore noted that Public Works Director Nate Mears could help in the grounds management of the Memorial Garden.

New Business

Heritage Commission mission and authority: Members discussed the topic of the Commission introducing and sponsoring State legislation and noted that there had been some concerns expressed by the Select Board on this subject. Mr. Houghton expressed the need for collaboration, communication and coordination with the Select Board and other town boards and commissions when advocating legislation. Mr. Merrill noted that as a regular Commission member, he relies on Mr. Houghton as the Select Board representative to foster the cross-board communication, including conveying any concerns in a proactive manner. Mr. Houghton and Mr. Moore both agreed that the Commission has the authority on its own to sponsor and support legislation so long as it is clear that they are representing the Commission and not the Town at large.

Town Report: Mr. Canada will prepare a draft of the Commission’s report to the Town and asked for Commission members to send him any information on topics they would like included.

At 8:47 pm Mr. Canada made a motion to go into a non-public session, citing RSA 91-A:3 II (c) and (d). (Mr. Canada, Mr. Merrill, unanimous).

The Commission returned to public session at 9:04 with a motion to close the non-public session and seal the minutes due to the sensitive nature of the conversation (Mr. Merrill, Ms. Mitchell, unanimous).

Next regular meeting: January 8, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Land Use Conference Room.

The meeting adjourned 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Hathaway