

These minutes are subject to possible corrections/revisions at a subsequent Exeter Heritage Commission meeting.

Exeter Heritage Commission
Draft Minutes
Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices
March 2, 2011

Call Meeting to Order

Members Present: John Merkle, Don Clement, Mary Dupré, and Peter Michaud

Chairman, John Merkle, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices.

1. Approval of the minutes of February 9, 2011.

The February 9 minutes were deferred until the April Meeting.

2. Follow up discussion with the Historic District Commission on the possible expansion of the High Street and Downtown Historic Districts to include a portion of Portsmouth Avenue.

The Board began a discussion to decide what steps need to be taken to move forward on the expansion of the Historic Districts. John Merkle agreed to draft a letter to send to the property owners and contact Jeffrey Hyland to further discuss the option of Form-Based Code with both the Heritage and Historic District Commissions

3. Discussion and update on 89 Front Street.

The application for 89 Front Street has been appealed and will go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment on March 15. John Merkle stated that the Town is requesting a copy of the Demolition Review Committee letter written by Peter Michaud to the Historic District Commission on recommendations to the proposed demolition and work. Mr. Michaud stated that the letter should be on file with the application. The Board further discussed what was approved and several members agreed to be in attendance at the upcoming ZBA meeting.

4. Follow-up discussion on possible changes to the demolition review ordinance.

John Merkle stated that he recently attended a meeting in Concord and spoke with several other municipalities, the Concord Heritage Commission, and the Preservation Alliance to discuss issues involving the Demolition Review Ordinance. In Concord, the Demolition Review Committee has a total of 49 days to hold a public hearing as opposed to Exeter's Demolition Review Committee which allows only 30 days. Concord also posts a sign on properties slated for demolition to inform the Town of a public hearing date and notice. Don Clement explained that the Planning Board has rejected this idea several times for Zoning Board of Adjustment and Historic District Commission uses. Mr. Clement recommended that Mr. Merkle speak with Silvia van Aulock, Town Planner for more details regarding sign notification.

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The Board discussed issues regarding appropriate time periods for the Demolition Review Process, explaining that any alterations to the Demolition Review Ordinance would require a Zoning Ordinance Change. It was agreed that the five day time period for an initial determination as well as the twelve day period for a public hearing should be extended to allow for the appropriate steps to occur. Any changes will need to be submitted prior to the 2012 Town Meeting for voting. Pam Gjetum, Chairman to the Historic District Commission volunteered to assist with research at the Historical Society. Mr. Merkle stated that the completion of the Town Wide Survey would help to identify key properties within the Town.

5. Update on the status of the Certified Local Government grants for a town wide mapping survey of historical and cultural resources and the survey for the Winter Street cemetery.

John Merkle announced that the Heritage Commission will be receiving new applications for the Certified Local Government grant for the town-wide mapping survey to be resubmitted. The original application did not go before the Governor's Council and expired before it was executed. The survey for the Winter Street Cemetery to determine eligibility for the State of National Registers has passed before the Governor and Council and the RFP is ready to be drafted. Mr. Merkle stated that he received a copy of the Exeter Conservation Commission's RFP for their Natural Resource Inventory from Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner, which can be used as a guide to draft the two RFPs for both surveys. Peter Michaud volunteered to draft the contractor service qualifications and scope of work before the end of the week, along with a draft for the RFP using what Ms. Murphy has shared. The River Study Committee and the ECC are both receptive to working with the Heritage Commission to overlay town surveys.

Mary Dupré announced that the Independence Museum is holding the Ghosts of Winter Street Cemetery event on October 29, explaining that this would be an opportune time for the survey to be completed.

6. Demolition request updates.

Doug Eastman, Building Inspector has informed the Heritage Commission that a small barn on 187 Front Street needs to be demolished because it has been deemed a threat to public safety as it stands. John Merkle stated that he has only observed the property from the street but noticed the roof appeared to be partially caved in and one of the walls was bowed out considerably. After clearing the barn out, Mr. Eastman stated that the snow banks were helping to buttress the structure and when the snow was removed, the building began to fall. The barn is only around 16 feet wide and no taller than two stories in height. There is a provision within the Demolition Review Ordinance that states the Building Inspector has the right to make a determination regarding demolition after informing the Demolition Review Committee. Don Clement suggested to photograph the building and document the process to ensure an official paper trail.

The Board began a discussion regarding how the Town stores photos of record and whether or not the Heritage Commission should have a place to store photos of demolished structures for record-keeping. Pam Gjetum offered to store the photos at the Historical Society while Don Clement recommended the photos (printed and digital) be stored within

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the Town Offices. Mr. Merkle offered to speak to the Planning Department further regarding a file cabinet location.

Don Clement stated that the Zoning Board of Adjustment has recently approved the Riverwoods project to demolish the Reedy Farm Barnhouse and construct a new office building. A formal demolition application has yet to be submitted.

7. Update and discussion concerning other properties at possible risk.

John Merkle explained that Connor Farm is still in the process of moving forward and there is a descendent of the family that may be interested in the property. No action has been taken.

There is no update to the High Street Market property.

The Board discussed the progress of the Fogg-Rollin's House. Mr. Merkle explained that he suggested to Jennifer Goodman if the Easement Committee would be interested in the building.

8. Other Business.

John Merkle stated that he was asked if the Heritage Commission would be interested in broadcasting their meetings on Channel 22. Don Clement explained that Channel 98 will become public access and allows for more room on Channel 22 for additional public meetings. The Board discussed the issue further, agreeing that meetings involving the Demolition Review Committee and the expansion of the Historic District should be broadcasted to allow for the public to be better informed. It was agreed that the Heritage Committee meetings do not merit televised access due to its advisory capacity.

The Board began a discussion regarding term limits and which members need to be reappointed. Both Mary Dupré and Peter Michaud are approaching the end of their terms and need to inform the Board of Selectman if they are interested in remaining on the Heritage Commission.

Don Clement motioned to adjourn, Peter Michaud seconded: Vote unanimous.

Chairman John Merkle adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary