

Draft Minutes

Exeter Heritage Commission

Wheelwright Room

Exeter Town Office

January 11, 2012

Call Meeting to Order

Members present: *Peter Smith, Peter Michaud, Mary Dupré, Planning Board rep. Kathy Corson, Historic District rep. Ron Schutz, Selectman rep Julie Gilman and John Merkle, Chairman*

Chairman John Merkle called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in the Wheelwright Room at the Exeter Town Office.

- **Approval of minutes**

In reviewing the minutes of December 14, 2011 Mr. Merkle commented on the narrative in the Properties at Risk paragraph. He clarified that no discussion of the 81 High St. property was had: *the members felt it was for the HDC to make comments when the project goes before them at their January meeting.*

The review of this portion of the minutes was prompted by correspondence from Town Council stating no discussion is to be had before an application (case) has been opened by a Town Committee.

Mr. Michaud noted he would like to see the letter as the Heritage Commission sits in an advisory capacity; not a land-use board. He questioned the purpose and purview of the group if there were those restrictions.

As all the members had not read the letter, Ms. Gilman offered to obtain the letter and disburse to the members.

With no other questions or comments, The Chair asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes as presented. Motion to accept moved by Mr. Schutz: seconded by Ms. Corson. Motion carried.

- **General discussion of Great Dam Removal Study**

The Heritage Commission is a designated consulting party in the study but Mr. Merkle has not had any recent contact with the consultant from the firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) that is preparing the study. Responding to questions, Ms. Gilman summarized the studies/findings leading up to the formation of the present Dam Removal Study. Mr. Michaud added the effects of scouring on historic resources will be addressed.

Mr. Michaud asked if there is not the need to consider how to start to change the perception out there that the removal of the Dam is a foregone conclusion when in actuality it is just one of several options that Town has in deciding how it treats the resource. The Commission is an advocate for the historical resources in the Town and righting that perception perhaps should

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be addressed. Mr. Merkle felt as the group starts getting input back from the River Study Committee there will be the need for public meetings.

- **Web site revisions**

Mr. Schutz is working on verifying that the present links listed on the Heritage site are valid working links. He received authorization from the Historic District Commission to evaluate their current links but does need authorization from Town IT Coordinator to go in and make any corrections to the links.

Ms. Gilman spoke of how the Commission wants to populate the new proposed website. Looking at the list Mr. Schutz proposed last month they are now being asked to determine the number of pages needed to accommodate the messaging. Selectmen Clement and Ferraro are preparing an RFP for the revised web page and are asking Departments, Commissions for the number of pages desired so as to prepare a more detailed proposal. In reviewing the content outlined, Mr. Schutz felt ten (10) pages would be sufficient.

If photographs are to be streaming on the site, and if some are to be static, Mr. Clement and Mr. Ferraro need to know the Commission wishes an active site. Ms. Gilman noted it is not too soon to start to develop a list of those properties—and not just downtown properties—of those photographs you would want to include. It was agreed taking the actual photographs now would be premature until the format and guidelines for including photos are determined.

- **Town Wide Mapping Survey**

The discussion of linking the Town GIS information onto the website led Ms. Gilman to report on the prepared and posted RFP for the Town mapping survey. Two firms have submitted responses and one an example of what their firm was prepared to deliver. Both are offering similar deliverables but obtained in different manners. The final product proposed is GIS shaped files to overlay on Town maps which Ms. Gilman wasn't sure it would be successful using the present Town maps and personnel for inputting the information.

Discussion determined the sample map submitted was a method of display but a more traditional method was needed to precede this form (of map). Mr. Michaud felt the consultants need to go back and review the purpose as defined by the agent (Division of Historic Resources) providing the Certified Local Government (CLG) funds. The mapping survey form is the first step in a larger project. All the historic maps need to be viewed, determined what has been surveyed, what needs to be surveyed and then start to develop a list of the resources in the Town and where. This will be analyzed within the report including some visuals, the assemblage of those maps, and some written analysis developed by the consultant. It could be a way to organize the data and put in digital format that would be very much desired but that can not be submitted to DHR as the only document. The digital display maps as proposed by the two responders would not satisfy DHR; could be a part but not the only deliverable component.

It was agreed the need to go back to the two responders and clarify the final product needs to meet the criteria set by DHR in this first mapping phase using the links provided in the RFP.

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Gilman did acknowledge the need to straighten out the process of how GIS maps are handled within the Town. The maintenance and input of updates are handled by outside firms and are proprietary so the Town doesn't have the data.

- **Update on Form Based Codes**

A meeting of the sub-committee of the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee (ZORC) is scheduled for later this month.

- **Update on Winter St. Cemetery**

Ms. Gilman will follow up on a letter sent to the Town re-affirming their interest to be added to the State Registry of Historic Places.

- **Demolition Requests**

No requests received at this time

- **Other Properties at Risk**

No report at this time

- **Other Business**

Ms. Gilman reminded the members the Heritage Commission will host the Visioning Session for the Exeter Theater Company in the evening of January 18, 2012. She will be giving a short introduction on the role of the Commission within the Town. She also asked for volunteers to assist in registering attendees, handing out agendas etc.

The Chairman requested Ms. Gilman verify the status of the Commission members and when their terms of membership are set to expire.

Ms. Gilman did send out information on the former Getty Station on Bow St, to the National Association of Auto Museums and received a reply there may be some interest and are passing it on to their members. Having received a citizens' petition to make the purchase a warrant article, the Town can not act until after the vote at the March election.

On the progress of a sale of the Fogg-Rollins property, Mr. Smith replied there have been showings but the restrictions on what improvements can be made seems to be the deterrent. Mr. Michaud suggested the current realtor contact the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) for more information on what can be done under the deed restrictions.

- **Adjournment**

With no further business before the Commission a motion was made and seconded to Adjourn. Vote: unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Recording Secretary