Exeter Heritage Commission

November 18, 2015

Draft Minutes

Members present: Julie Gilman, John Merkle, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Kelly Bergeron, Mary Dupre, Faith Flythe

Chairman Merkle called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Wheelwright Room of the Town Office Building.

First Business: Minutes of October 14, 2015 but the members had not received a copy so they were postponed until the next meeting.

John stated that the next item on the agenda is the LCHIP and he asked Julie to talk about this. Julie passed out paperwork about this to the commission. Julie stated that the Budget Committee has recommended funding half of the proposed cost for the Winter Street Cemetery. The next grant round starts in the Spring of 2016 and she thought it would be really good to get this under their belts because it is a complex application process. She stated that she passed out this information so everyone would understand what the commission would have to do to get the information ready. She would like everyone to look at the information and give feedback. John asked Julie if she had ever gone to a session. Julie and Kelly went to one over the summer. John commented that the application had changed and Julie said it had and that is why they were having the classes. Pam asked Julie what she wanted from the commission and Julie stated that she just wanted everyone to review it and at the next meeting come back with questions and comments. John asked what the total amount is and Julie stated that the budget has $10,500 and they have to do a 50 50 match, so it would be $21,000 total. Julie stated that if the budget fails, there is clearly not enough money from last year because there is only $2,000 to proceed with this. Hopefully, everyone will vote for the budget. Julie stated that if the commission does get this and not the grant, she is proposing that the commission do it in phases. This would mean doing only half of the cemetery or the hardest hit stones first and then next year do some more. John asked if this money covers restoration and Julie said that it does. John then asked if the commission could do this with a moose plate grant if needed. Julie was not sure but stated there was a condition about if you ask for money from one program, you cannot ask another one. She is not sure if the LCIP and moose plate conflict.

John then asked if what they had just discussed coincides with the next on the agenda which is review of the 2016 commission budget requests. Julie stated that it does. Julie then stated that if the commission does not get a grant, they have $10,500 to spend. Julie stated that half of the cemetery could be done. Faith then stated that $20,000 would only cover 100 stones. Half of that would not be that many. John then asked if this includes getting the trees out of there and Julie stated that it does not. Julie stated that when she went to the training and she asked about the tree removal, Didget told her that tree removal by itself probably would not be a good grant. It would be better to do it as an overall restoration project. The grant needs to be written as a phase approach.

Next is the demolition review update. John stated that the papers have finally gone in for the removal of the dam. John stated that he signed them two weeks ago. John stated that next fall it should be coming down. Julie stated that is the schedule. John stated that the head works would be kept in place.

He stated there is going to be a permanent exhibit in the library. There is an etched glass panel which he thinks will end up in the library as well. There will also be documentation that will be over in the Historical Society. Julie stated that they also asked for one of the panels to be out in front. A standard historic district type of panel.

Next on the agenda was the update on the status of the Winter Street Cemetery and the commission has already been talked about. Faith stated that the ceremony for Wreaths Across America was going to be on December 12th. Faith stated that the ceremony does not take very long. It only lasts about 20 minutes.

Next is demolition review update. Julie stated that everything is going ok with this. She is not sure about the photographs. She stated that there was not much left in the interior to photograph because he had stripped it all out. She stated that the owner is going to save the front windows. She also stated that the owner was going to refurbish it but once he started getting into it, the structure was not good. It was lagging and in the basement there were beams that were holding up and they were cracked. John asked if there was anything else the commission needed to watch. Julie stated the academy cage. Julie stated that nothing has been received yet, but they are proposing to take it down and put in a parking garage. Kelly then asked what the cage was. John stated it is the old gym and track. It has a dirt floor and second floor balcony for running. He stated it is a large building and it use to have a glass roof.

John then stated that he had a note from last month's meeting that at some point the commission wanted to discuss 79E. Julie said yes, but asked if it could be done next month because Daren is coming to the HDC Thursday to talk about it. Kelly asked what the 79E was. Julie stated that it is a tax incentive program. If someone is renovating a house or commercial, they can get a tax break approved by the selectmen. The selectmen can choose how long for the break, and she thinks it is up to five years. After they are done with the renovations, the taxes will go up according to the improved assessment and they will pay it back in taxes. Commercial buildings call for the HDC to review the structure before anything starts and she thinks they use the HDC because that was in place before Heritage Commissions were formed. It is not just for historic buildings. It is town wide. Julie then stated that when the HDC talks about this, if the Heritage Commission wanted to have a part in it. John stated that he needs to know more about it.

John asked if anyone had anything else and Julie stated that she sent everyone a copy of the report they got from Municipal Resources and review of the planning development. John stated it was forty something pages. Julie stated that it had some good observations on it. She would like any comments the commission may have on this. She stated that one of the things in the report was the suggestion of the HDC and the Heritage Commission to be combined. John stated that it is done in other towns. John stated that he was not interviewed for this. He stated they gave him three times when he was suppose to call in. He contacted them because he was out of town. He stated they gave him one on a Saturday afternoon but could not do it. He is not sure if any of his comments are in the report because he has not read all of it yet.

Julie stated that she would like comments about this report. Where you see a problem, or where you see a priority. Where you see commonalities. There is going to be an all boards meeting.

John asked if there was anything else anyone wanted to talk about. There was none so John made a motion to adjourn. Julie seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary