

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2012

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, November 1, 2012, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chair Phil Donovan, Members Dr. Bryant Tolles, Marilyn Fraser, Richard Jaques, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Carol Durgy Brooks, Robert V. Johnson II, Frederick Richards, and Councilor Shurtleff. City Planner Gloria McPherson and Administrative Specialist Donna Muir were also present.

2. Minutes of the October 4, 2012 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the October 4, 2012, Heritage Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Councilor Shurtleff to accept the minutes as written, and seconded by Ms. Fraser. Motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business:

- a) Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project
 - 1) Advisory Committee progress update
 - 2) Comments from Consulting Entities

The Chair requested Ms. McPherson provide the update to the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project.

Ms. McPherson explained that the City received a 4.7 million dollar grant for the improvement of Main Street. She stated that the grant was based on the Complete Streets policy that the City Council adopted in 2009. Ms. McPherson reported that the Complete Streets policy seeks to include all modes of travel being improved on any City streets being improved and also encompasses improving travel, walkability, and livability.

Ms. McPherson suggested that the Heritage Commission's involvement would be in the design details, such as street lighting, sidewalks, paving, and street trees.

Ms. McPherson stated that Ms. Hengen is the historic consultant to the firm that was selected for the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project. She thought it would be helpful if Ms. Hengen described her role on the project team.

Ms. Hengen explained that the scope of her role as team consultant in historic preservation is three-fold:

- 1) Completing an inventory of all the streetscape features
- 2) Historic streetscape assessment of how Main Street has evolved in its lifetime, with more emphasis on the past 150 years
- 3) Complete a building-by-building survey for all the features (not including building facades) from sidewalk to curb along Main Street.

Ms. Brooks asked whether there would be a final plan for which the Heritage Commission can comment. Ms. McPherson stated that City Council will hold a public hearing on the general design direction of the project and that the Advisory Committee has been listening to public comments. She stated that she didn't know whether the design development process will be open to public comments.

The Chair asked what the report from the Advisory Committee to the City Council would entail. Ms. McPherson responded that it will be the big picture streetscape items and allocation of uses within the right-of-way.

Mr. Richards asked whether handicapped access has been considered by the Advisory Committee. Ms. McPherson responded that the Disability Rights Center of NH and a Boston firm have provided comments to the Advisory Committee regarding ADA accessibility, and noted that accessibility is a component of Complete Streets.

The Chair stated that the role for the Heritage Commission would be further down the road during the design phase of the project. Ms. McPherson stated that any one of the Commission members could attend the Tuesday and Thursday evening meetings of the Advisory Committee and speak during the public comment section of the meeting. She also informed the Commission that on November 7th there will be a public hearing with NH Listens facilitating the session. She stated that NH Listens will be providing a report to the Committee.

b) Update on outreach for Neighborhood Heritage Districts

The Chair stated that he and Mr. McConaha have had conversations regarding the Stickney Hill Road neighborhood and they are awaiting a response from the residents. Ms. Hengen asked whether there had been follow up from the May meeting held with the neighborhood residents. The Chair explained that Mr. McConaha and Ms. Zanes of Stickney Hill Road had conversed and were awaiting a response from Ms. Zanes and the other residents.

c) Update on Granite Marker Inventory Project

The Chair reported that Mr. Johnson had previously discussed creating an inventory of the granite markers located in Concord, and he said that Ms. McPherson had an update about the project.

Ms. McPherson explained that the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission was willing to make some interns available who would be able to assist with this project. She asked whether the Heritage Commission would like to have the interns inventory the various granite markers throughout the City. The Commission expressed their interest in having the interns gather data on each of the markers, including photographs, a description, the location, and the overall condition.

The Commission decided that Commission members would email the Chair the location of any markers that Commission members are aware and that he would forward the list to Ms. McPherson to coordinate the effort with the CNHRPC. It was suggested that the Concord Insider be asked to poll residents to see if they

knew of any granite commemorative markers that could be included in the inventory. Another suggestion was to have a contest for residents regarding the location of the markers.

Mr. Johnson thought it would be appropriate to create a brochure once the project was complete, crediting the Heritage Commission for the project.

d) Sustainability and the Heritage Commission's mission

The Chair introduced Audra Klumb, a student pursuing her Master's Degree at Plymouth State University.

Ms. Klumb explained that she was attending the Commission meeting as part of a requirement for one of her courses at Plymouth State University. She asked what the Heritage Commission felt or understood its mission to be. The Commission responded with the following:

- 1) To recognize and preserve the City's Heritage
- 2) To educate the public
- 3) To commemorate historic properties, people and various historic eras
- 4) To maintain and preserve historic structures

Ms. Klumb then asked how well sustainability is included in the Heritage Commission's mission. It was agreed that sustainability is not included as broadly as it could be.

The Commission discussed a project that the US Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) sponsored in Concord a year or so ago. Ms. McPherson stated that she would follow up with the Deputy City Manager Carlos Baia to find out the results of that project.

4. Regular Business:

- a) Demolition Review – Committee Report

The Chair reported that there were no applications to review.

- b) Heritage Sign Program

Ms. Brooks stated that there was nothing new regarding the Heritage Sign Program.

5. Other Business:

Mr. Richards explained that he had received an email from Ms. Hengen discussing the possibility of obtaining preservation easements on the three elementary schools that the Concord School District is getting ready to sell. He stated that the NH Preservation Alliance has a brochure explaining the process.

The Commission discussed that a preservation easement could include portions of the buildings' façade as well as interior portions of the buildings, as a way to ensure the buildings' historic integrity. The Commission talked about some of the responsibilities of the easement holder, which would include inspecting the property for any violations of the easements.

Ms. McPherson stated that generally a city or town purchases the easement from the property owner and that it may be unrealistic to think that the Concord School District would want to encumber any of the buildings when they are trying to see them. She added that she thought the easements should still be pursued.

Mr. Johnson asked what would be included in the preservation easement. Ms. Hengen stated that when the Concord School District went through the process of deciding whether or not to demolish the buildings, a list was created outlining a baseline of historic features of each of the buildings.

The Chair explained that the Heritage Commission should continue to explore the possibility of preservation easements on the three elementary school building and that this topic would be added to the agenda for follow-up.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Marilyn Fraser and seconded by Dr. Tolles to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Gloria McPherson
City Planner

djm