

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

November 3, 2011

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers, at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, November 3, 2011, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

Chairperson Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chairperson Donovan, Members Dr. Bryant Tolles, Jr., James McConaha, Robert V. Johnson, II [who arrived at 4:40 pm], Stephen Shurtleff, Marilyn Fraser, and Vice Chair Richards. City Planner Gloria McPherson and Administrative Specialist Donna Muir were also present.

Chairperson Donovan elevated the alternate members to full member status for the meeting.

Chairperson Donovan introduced the new City Planner, Gloria McPherson, to the members of the Heritage Commission.

2. Minutes of the October 6, 2011 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the October 6, 2011, Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Shurtleff to accept the minutes as presented and seconded by Ms. Fraser.

3. New Business:

a. CLG Grant for 19th Century Manufacturing Facilities – South Main Street Project – Selection of Grant Consultant.

Chairperson Donovan stated that two proposals had been received for the CLG grant – one from Ms. Lisa Mausolf and the other from Mr. Douglas McVarish. Chairperson Donovan explained that he and Vice Chair Richards met to review the proposals, and they recommend that the Heritage Commission choose Ms. Mausolf's proposal, as they felt she was more qualified and had more experience in Concord. Senior Planner, Becky Hebert, also reviewed the proposals and agreed with the recommendation. Chairperson Donovan stated that although Mr. McVarish had worked for a good firm, he did not have as much experience in the Concord area. Ms. Muir stated that she would notify Mr. Doug Ross, the City's Purchasing Manager, of the decision.

b. Follow-up regarding the Schools Re-Use Program meeting with Michael Castagna.

Chairperson Donovan stated that he, Dr. Tolles, and Mr. McConaha met with Michael Castagna to discuss the Schools Re-Use Program. He stated that Mr. Castagna was meeting with all the stakeholders regarding the best reuse of the school buildings. Chairperson Donovan expressed that Mr. Castagna has a good understanding of the schools and of adaptive reuse. He stated that Mr. Castagna will be preparing a report for dissemination within the next few months and will be responsible for bringing together all the necessary resources to implement the agreed-upon strategies. Dr. Tolles stated that he thought the meeting was enlightening for both himself and Mr. Castagna.

c. Permanent Location for the Governor Isaac Hill Monument.

Mr. Johnson stated that there has not been any movement regarding the permanent location for the Governor Isaac Hill monument, as he has been unable to get together with City staff. He stated that he would still like to see the monument permanently placed on the bump-out located in front of the entrance to Eagle Square. Chairperson Donovan provided brief background information about the monument to the new City Planner, Gloria McPherson.

Mr. Johnson explained that Perry Monuments, located on Route 106, had moved the monument from the Goodwill Store on Loudon Road to Perry Monuments, refurbished the monument, and has volunteered to move it to its new permanent location, whenever a decision is made regarding a new permanent location. Mr. Johnson stated that he has had a number of conversations with Ms. Sarah Perry, regarding ways that the monument could be set into its permanent location. He reported that a few weeks ago when he was at Perry Monuments, he noted that the base of the monument had been cut off.

Mr. McConaha reported that during conversations he has had with Ms. Perry, they spoke of the base of the monument being too large. He stated that he thought it was a good idea for Perry Monument to cut off some of the base, but had not discussed the precise amount to be removed. When he returned to the monument company at a later date, most of the base had been removed. Mr. McConaha stated that Perry Monuments intended to treat the monument in the same manner as they do gravestones, by preparing a concrete base to attach to the monument and the base would then be installed underground.

Mr. Johnson stated that he had discussed some alternatives with Ms. Perry, which included the following:

1. A hole is dug in the permanent location for the monument, concrete is poured into the hole, and the monument is placed on the poured concrete;
2. The monument is set into the ground as is, burying four to five inches of the current base; or
3. A granite block is added to the bottom of the monument, which would then be used as the base.

Chairperson Donovan suggested that it would probably make more sense to wait to determine the type of base for the monument until a permanent location was named. The Commission members discussed the various options for the location of the monument, and Mr. Johnson stated that he would contact the City Manager and the Mayor to set up a meeting.

d. EPA/Historic Trust Team Community Meeting and Property Owner / Developer Workshop scheduled for the evening of November 15th and the morning of November 16th.

Chairperson Donovan reviewed the schedule for the EPA workshop with the Commission members. Vice Chair Richards stated that he was planning to attend.

e. Resolution by the Planning Board in regard to the Preservation of Historic structures and the Demolition Review Ordinance.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the Commission had been provided a copy of Assistant City Planner, Stephen Henninger's Report to the Mayor and the City Council regarding the preservation of historic structures and the Demolition Review ordinance.

Mr. Shurtleff stated the Planning Board, during its consideration of the site plan for the Bindery Project at 43-45 South Main Street, delayed action on the application from September 21st to October 5th to allow for the demolition delay public hearing to be held, which has been scheduled for September 29th. He explained that the Planning Board recommended to City Council that a study committee be established to review the existing demolition delay process, and that the most important historic resources in the City be identified in an objective manner and this information be readily available to potential purchasers and developers of these historic properties.

Chairperson Donovan stated that he has spoken separately with both the Mayor and Mr. Duprey regarding RSA 79-E. He has also spoken with Matt Walsh, who agreed to draft some possible changes to RSA 79-E. Some of the changes discussed include the following:

1. Extending the time frame for 79-E tax credits from 5 years to a longer term for projects involving the renovation of properties which are already listed on, or have been determined eligible for, the State or National Registers of Historic Places;
2. Allowing individual communities to determine the duration of said credits. (RSA 79-E is currently a “local option” statute);
3. Amending RSA 79-E to create a “tiered” structure for 79-E credits and historic structures by bifurcating renovation of historic properties which either use or do not use Historic Tax Credits (and, by extension, undertake a renovation which is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Properties). For example, the statute could be revised whereby projects involving the renovation of historic properties but not to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards or Historic Tax Credits might be eligible for a 7 year 79-E Credit. Projects which choose to do a more intensive and historically accurate renovation consistent with the Secretary’s Standards, might get a “bonus” of 5 additional years (the rationale being that following the Secretary’s Standards are typically more expensive than a normal renovation process). When used together, a historic property would be theoretically eligible for up to 12 years of tax credit, in addition to other incentives already in the statute;
4. Allowing tax credits for re-use of portions of a building; and
5. Allowing RSA 79-E to be adjudicated locally.

Chairperson Donovan stated that there have been conversations about establishing a group, comprised of members of the Planning Board, City Council, developers, property owners, and the preservation community, to review the existing demolition delay process and to prepare recommendations on improving the process. He reported that people realize that what is currently in place, is not working. Mr. Shurtleff stated that it is in the best interest of the developers and property owners to work with this group, and that it is important to have preservationists onboard earlier in the demolition process.

Mr. Johnson stated that another element to this is that in addition to the tax breaks that are allowed, there is a need for the historic buildings in Concord to be inventoried. He added that in order to inventory these properties, there is a need for funding.

Dr. Tolles agreed and said that an entire database of all historic properties in Concord is needed.

Vice Chair Richard stated that this is an opportunity for the Heritage Commission to seek funding for National Register Historic Districts in various areas of the City. He stated that the documentation for this needs to be comprehensive, and unlike the surveys which are completed through the Certified Local Government grants, National Register inventories must follow the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines. Vice Chair Richards stated that it would be extremely costly to research and create the necessary documentation for these National Register Historic Districts.

Mr. Shurtleff said that the cost factor would prohibit the City from funding this city-wide undertaking, especially in the current economy. He suggested that perhaps Wards 4 and 6 would be the most important.

Chairperson Donovan explained that thus far the Heritage Commission has inventoried the school buildings and some of the City's barns and other outbuildings, and that now the South End manufacturing facilities would be inventoried. However, he stated, these are just tiny pieces of what needs to be done.

Ms. Fraser stated that with the recent demolitions, more citizens are aware of the Heritage Commission and their mission, and she feels that the Heritage Commission can have the most impact at this time.

Mr. Johnson expressed that he thought the Conservation Commission has it easier, as they have the backing of the Planning Division, and that the Planning Board also has the backing of the Planning Division. He doesn't feel that the Heritage Commission has anyone in the City to back them.

Mr. McConaha believes that the Heritage Commission should be proactive at this time, identifying incentives other than tax credits, and have practical ideas ready to be presented to the Mayor, City Council, and the group being considered to review the demolition delay process. He feels that the Heritage Commission would have the greatest impact if they are prepared beforehand.

Chairperson Donovan stated that he is encouraged that these discussions have begun and is hopeful that these discussions will lead to positive outcomes. He also realizes that these types of changes take time.

f. Consideration of the NHDHR Project Review for Weatherization – Clark Residence, 30 Old Loudon Road, Concord.

Chairperson Donovan stated that this item was for information purposes only, and that no further action by the Heritage Commission was necessary.

g. Consideration of the NHDHR Project Review for ATF Spillway & Dam Alterations – 113 West Parish Road, Concord.

Chairperson Donovan stated that this item was for information purposes only, and that no further action by the Heritage Commission was necessary.

4. Old Business:

a. Heritage Sign Program.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the Heritage Sign Committee hosted a workshop on October 12th at the Concord Library. He stated that according to Ms. Brooks, the Heritage Sign Program Committee Chair, the program was well attended. Mr. Johnson reminded the Commission members that at the October

Heritage Commission meeting, Ms. Brooks strongly suggested that all members of the Heritage Commission obtain signs for their own properties.

b. Demolition Review Committee.

Vice Chair Richards stated that a demolition application had been received regarding a single family residence at 212 Fisherville Road. The members of the Demolition Review Committee were in agreement that the property was not historically significant, and they would sign-off on the application.

5. Introduction of the new City Planner, Gloria McPherson:

Chairperson Donovan asked Ms. McPherson to spend a little time talking with the Commission members about her background and interests.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Mr. Shurtleff and seconded by Mr. Johnson to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist