

# HERITAGE COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

December 6, 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, December 6, 2012, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

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

2. Minutes of the November 1, 2012 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the November 1 2012, Heritage Commission meeting.

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

3. New Business:

a) Preservation Easements on Elementary Schools owned by the Concord School District

The Chair stated that Mr. Richards and Ms. Hengen had brought the possibility having preservation easements on the three elementary schools that are currently for sale. Ms. Hengen stated that she had not seen the final report on the schools, so she doesn't know whether preservation easements were recommended. Mr. Richards said that he believed that the final report for all three schools recommended preservation easements.

The Chair asked whether the report's recommendations which were accepted by the Concord School District were binding. He explained that the Heritage Commission will have oversight of the Walker School building because it is in the Historic District.

Ms. Hengen reported that if any state or federal funding is being used, the buildings will have to undergo a Section 106 review.

b) Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project

Ms. McPherson reported that the project and public hearing schedules have been completed for the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project.

c) Update on Outreach for Neighborhood Heritage Districts

Mr. McConaha explained that after briefing the neighbors back in the late spring, the Heritage Commission has not heard back from the Stickney Hill neighbors. He stated that he had spoken with Hope Zanes, one of the neighbors a month or so ago, and she told him that it might be best if the Heritage Commission moves on as the Stickney Hill neighbors are still mulling it over. Mr. McConaha feels that the neighbors are interested in preserving their neighborhood, but no one is talking the ball and running with it.

The Chair stated that the deadline for City Council approval to apply for the grant is in January. He reported that the Penacook neighborhood in the Rolfe Barn area have been informally talked to about Neighborhood Heritage Districts, but he doesn't believe that the group will be able to come together before the January deadline.

Ms. Fraser asked about the Abbot Downing neighborhood, stating that there had been some interest in forming a neighborhood group in the past. The Chair responded that the work with the Abbot Downing neighbors was done a long time ago and where there has been no continuity, the Heritage Commission would have to begin from scratch.

Ms. Fraser stated that there needs to be an individual in the neighborhood who is enthused and excited about the Neighborhood Heritage District program and will be able to rally the neighbors.

Ms. Hengen explained that perhaps the Heritage Commission could generate some kind of publicity to find such an enthused neighbor.

Ms. Brooks asked whether 100 percent of the land owners in a chosen neighborhood have to be on board with the project. The Chair responded that the City Council wants all the neighbors on board.

The Commission discussed various towns that have either instituted Neighborhood Heritage Districts or are in the process, such as Hooksett, NH and Cambridge, MA. Ms. McPherson stated that the social climate in Cambridge is very different from the social climate in Concord.

Mr. Richards said that he feels that the Neighborhood Heritage Districts have been a roadblock to the Commission and perhaps the Commission should be focusing on the items in the Historic Resources section of the City's Master Plan.

#### d) Update on the Granite Marker Inventory Project

The Chair explained that the interns that Ms. McPherson set up to inventory Concord's granite markers were no longer available. Ms. McPherson stated that the interns were only available for the semester and that she had not received any information from the Heritage Commission.

The Chair stated that it might be possible to get some interns for the upcoming semester. He suggested that Commission members submit any information on granite markers to Ms. McPherson. Ms. Brooks asked whether Ms. McPherson could email a list of the markers she already has. Ms. McPherson stated that she would email the list.

#### e) Establishment of a Work Group to Compile and Evaluate Grant Funding Sources

The Chair stated that if the Heritage Commission had a pot of money, it would be easier to accomplish some items, such as preservation easements. He said that Ms. McPherson recommended that the Heritage

Commission look into funding sources as a way to leverage money from the City. Ms. McPherson explained that City Council won't fund projects without the Heritage Commission doing the work.

Ms. McPherson discussed how the Conservation Commission works – they know what grants are available and what the criteria are for each of the grants. She said that the Commission looks at available land with the grant criteria in mind.

The Chair said that he would like to form a work group to look for grant funding sources. Mr. Richards said that there is not much funding available for operating funds. Ms. McPherson stated that the LCHIP funds offer some grants for historic districts. Ms. Hengen suggested that the working group begin by looking at the NH Division of Historical Resources' and the NH Preservation Alliances' websites, as both these agencies announce grant opportunities online.

The Chair said that it is important to know what is out there. He stated that he would like to ask Councilor Shurtleff to be a part of the work group and asked if any other member of the Heritage Commission was interested. Ms. Fraser volunteered. The Chair stated that he would set up a meeting of the working group shortly.

f) Concern with the Transfer of the Walker School Building to Bill Binnie

Mr. McConaha said that his concern with the pending sale of the Walker School building to Bill Binnie, who owns radio stations, is the number of antennas that will be located on the building, which is located in the Historic District.

Ms. McPherson explained that the Planning Board would approve or disapprove of any antennas located on the building.

Mr. Richards said that he thinks that the visual mess would be low, and added that there is not a lot of antenna mess on the roof of the Two Pillsbury Street building where NH Public Radio is located. Mr. McConaha responded that the roof of the Pillsbury Street building is screened.

Mr. McConaha stated that Matt Cashman, the Concord School District's Facilities Manager, Matt Walsh, the City's Assistant for Special Projects, and Mike Castagna, the consultant for the Concord School District, all stated that preservation easements would be placed on each of the three buildings. Mr. McConaha feels that it is important that easements be honored.

Mr. Johnson stated that if proposed preservation easements were represented in the School's application for funding, it could be used to ensure that preservation easements are enforced.

Ms. McPherson stated that she would call Matt Cashman to inquire about the preservation easement recommendations.

4. Regular Business:

a) Demolition Review – Committee Report

Mr. Richards reported that there were no applications to review.

b) Heritage Sign Program

Ms. Brooks explained that she is working with Sandy Lee at the Concord Library to revamp the sign program workshops. Ms. Brooks envisions that she will work individually with anyone interested in obtaining a Heritage Sign.

5. Future Agenda Items:

- a) Concord's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration – presentation by Brent Todd

Ms. McPherson reported that she spoke with Mr. Todd and that he will be making a presentation to the Heritage Commission in February, regarding Concord's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration.

- b) Sewalls Falls Bridge – presentation by Ed Roberge, City Engineer

Ms. McPherson reported that the City Engineer, Ed Roberge, will be making a presentation to the Heritage Commission in January, regarding the Sewalls Falls Bridge project.

- c) Retirements from the Heritage Commission

The Chair announced that both Mr. McConaha and Ms. Hengen would be retiring from the Heritage Commission at the end of this year. He stated that Ms. Hengen and Mr. McConaha have been members of the Commission for 25 years and 16 years, respectively. The Chair said that both Mr. McConaha and Ms. Hengen would be missed and that they have been huge resources to both the Chair and the Commission. He thanked them both for their service to the Heritage Commission.

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 5:20 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Gloria McPherson  
City Planner

djm