

HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2019

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting at Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, March 7, 2019.

Attendees: Present at the meeting was Chair Richard Jaques, Vice-Chair Jim Spain, Councilor Allan Herschlag, Members Rich Woodfin, Carol Durgy Brooks, Bryant Tolles, Bob Johnson, and Alternate Mike Dunn.

Absent: Alternate Sarah Galligan

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist

Guests: City Engineer David Cedarholm, Associate Engineer Martha Drukker, and Elizabeth Hengen

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

Chairman Jaques called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Brooks provided revisions to the March 7, 2019 minutes for review. Councilor Herschlag moved to approve the minutes of March 7, 2019, as amended. Mr. Spain seconded the motion. The motion passed; 6/0/1. Mr. Woodfin abstained as he was not at the March meeting.

A comment in the March minutes generated a discussion regarding the preferred method for providing comments to other City Boards/Committees would be. The Commission agreed that it is necessary to clarify the intent of any communications to other Boards/Committees.

3. New Business

Items under 3 were taken out of order.

c. East Concord Marker

Martha Drukker, Associate Engineer for the City of Concord, met with the Heritage Commission (HC) regarding proposing a marker at the East Concord roundabout.

Ms. Drukker explained that the East Concord Garden Club has been in existence since 1935 and was very involved in East Concord. In 2015, the former City Engineer, Ed Roberge, worked with the Exit 16 Landscape Advisory Committee, which was established by the Mayor, to create a welcome marker at the East Concord roundabout. Several members of the Garden Club also participated on the advisory committee. The advisory committee discussed the landscaping of the area, along with the design, and materials of a welcome sign in that location. There were no funds in the budget for a sign, and no feasible proposal was made or settled on. The Garden Club is now sun setting and decided to donate the remaining funds in their trust to sponsor the sign. Ms. Drukker stated that the Garden Club worked and with Perry Monument Company to come up with a design and proposal utilizing a piece of granite from the Sewall's Falls bridge. The City installed conduit for lighting a sign during construction of the roundabout.

Ms. Drukker added that she is here as a courtesy to share the information with the HC prior to moving forward to City Council. The final decision belongs to City Council whether they will accept the sign.

Mr. Johnson, who was a member of the former landscaping committee, noted that he and Mr. Roberge searched through the remaining granite and were not able to find any pieces that they felt were large enough. He also noted that the date on the marker may be inaccurate. He stated that

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there has been a lack of communication with the original group who spent a lot of time thinking about this issue, and what needs to be done now is a meeting with the Club and anyone else that is interested in creating a design that represents all of East Concord.

Ms. Shank clarified that this is not a City project; a community group took up the issue and wants to make a proposal to Council.

Mr. Johnson stated that the community needs to have a greater role in choosing a sign. Councilor Herschlag suggested sending a memo to Council noting that the HC has some concern relative to the content of the marker. Commission members felt that the Garden Club logo was too large, that the image of the house did not represent the East Concord community, and that the date may not be correct. Mr. Johnson stated that nothing should be done until this goes to the community for discussion. Ms. Drukker explained that City Council makes the decision to accept the sign and funding. She suggested setting up a meeting with members of the former landscaping committee and the Garden Club to look at the design. She offered for Engineering to facilitate the meeting prior to anything being presented to City Council. She noted that the Garden Club may be open to meeting, or they may choose to go straight to Council and take their chances.

Mr. Johnson and Ms. Drukker will work together to ask the Garden Club and members of the former landscaping committee to meet to discuss the marker.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to keep the East Concord Marker as a current item on the HC agenda. Seconded by Mr. Woodfin, The motion passed unanimously; 7/0.

a. Sewall's Falls MoU Update – David Cedarholm & Liz Durfee Hengen

David Cedarholm, City of Concord Engineer and Liz Durfee Hengen met with the Heritage Commission to provide an update on the progress of the MoU for the sign pertaining to the historic rail yard at Storrs Street and Pleasant Street Extension, described as a pocket area.

Mr. Cedarholm read a paragraph in the MoU referencing the Heritage Commission's role for this project; to establish a project and develop the scope of work. The City Manager will handle other aspects for the project. City Council has approved the funds. He described the project to describe the Storrs Street history. A 3 foot by 6 foot panel is proposed to be installed with reference to the rail yard and train station. Mr. Cedarholm stated that this is an appropriate spot as it appears to be the doorstep of where the train station was. He stated that the train station and rail yard need to be celebrated. This panel will be a great way to do that, and it will be an asset to the City.

Ms. Hengen stated that she met with the Commission last May and the decision was made then to focus on the train station and rail yard for this pocket area. She explained that the biggest challenge is to determine who the audience is. She asked for the Commission's preliminary thoughts. What does the Commission see as objectives, what is the message they want to convey, and what would be a good image. Ms. Hengen stated that she believes a good photo of the station should be the focal point of the panel with a message explaining the history of the station along with notations regarding the architecture of the building from 1885.

Mr. Spain provided some history of the site and railroad and stated that it is very important to put the right things on the monument and make sure it tells a positive story.

Additional discussion was held to include explanations of what life was like at the spot, what the railroad brought to Concord, and what it was like when the station was demolished in 1960. Other suggestions were made regarding the appearance and construction of the sign, including using a facsimile of the sign from the original station, incorporating sounds via electronic scanning tools, building the structure using actual rail pieces, and referencing other railroads in Concord.

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Mr. Cedarholm stated that the goal is to get this completed this year. He stated that he and Ms. Hengen will plan to return in June with another update.

b. Abbott Village

Ms. Shank stated that the Abbott Village item would not be on the April Planning Board agenda. She explained that the Planning Board did not seem in favor of an approval to allow demolition. The applicant was requested to obtain a second assessment on the structural integrity of the Abbott House and provide that report to the Planning Board. This will be conducted by a consultant referred by staff at the NH Preservation Alliance.

Mr. Johnson commented that the Heritage Commission does not have the authority to prevent demolition of the Abbott House from coming down even if it is “demo by neglect”; it is up to the Planning Board. He added that this Commission will say the same thing even if a different proposal is submitted. He stated that the original approval was that the Abbott House would not be torn down and he asked if the conditional approval remains to subsequent owners. He feels that the structure is a beauty and should be saved.

Mr. Woodfin stated that the Planning Board’s perspective was that there should be some effort to pursue renovations. He added that the PB would want some blessing from the HC if there were to be substantive changes.

Ms. Shank stated that the Planning Board’s motion was to grant approval to the request for the amendment for the previously approved subdivision plan to allow for the issuance of building permits for Phase 5 construction prior to the completion of Phase 4. A condition was added that no Certificates of Occupancy (CO) would be issued until the Planning Board reviews and votes on the Applicant’s future request to alter the original condition for the Abbott House to be restored.

A discussion was held regarding the process of recording plans and documents. Ms. Shank explained that site plans are not recorded; however, they are legally binding documents. Subdivision, condominium, and easement documents are recorded and any changes require an applicant to amend the documents. Certain amendments would require the project to come before the Planning Board. Ms. Brooks stated that bankruptcy does not change covenants or titles. She added that the Abbott House was to be a unit, and that the developer owns the property; therefore, she believes that the developer is still responsible. Ms. Shank noted that the applicant repeatedly stated that they were aware of the conditions of approval for the property when they purchased the property.

Councilor Herschlag stated that he believes that the developer has influenced residents in the area with the idea that the building is not salvageable, is a safety issue, should be demolished, and that it has impacted sales.

The Commission debated whether they should have another discussion with or without the developer, how to proceed and present a stronger statement to the Planning Board, and provide testimony at the next public hearing. Mr. Woodfin stated that a concise history of the building and property should be done by the Commission and provide that to the Planning Board. Mr. Spain, Mr. Dunn, and Ms. Brooks will work on a report and provide it to the Commission for review and further discussion at the May meeting.

4. Demolition Review Committee Report

Mr. Johnson stated that there is nothing new to report for the Demolition Review Committee.

Mr. Woodfin noted that the demolition of St. Peters Church will begin next week.

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Councilor Herschlag suggested that the Families in Transition building, owned by Steve Duprey, should be put on the watch list as it could be either moved or demolished.

Councilor Herschlag noted that the demolition that occurred on Centre Street does not appear to be completed. Ms. Shank will follow up with Code.

5. Old Business

a. CLG Grant – Update

Ms. Shank stated that there is nothing new to report.

b. Historic Photo Repository – Rich Woodfin

Mr. Woodfin stated that there is nothing new to report.

c. Demolition Delay Ordinance – Re-schedule Work Session

Ms. Shank stated that there have been some problems caused by the delay of revisions to the ordinance. She was directed to move forward with the proposed revisions pertaining to clean up and clarification of the process, but that the Commission can continue to discuss the changes it would like to see to the timeline and delay period. She did meet with the Code Department and additional revisions were made by Mr. Santa and Mr. Walker. A draft has been sent to the City Solicitor for review and will be shared with the Commission after feedback from Legal. After finalizing the amendments, the next step will be to present to City Council.

d. Heritage Sign Program – Carol Brooks

Ms. Brooks stated that there is nothing new to report.

e. Monuments & Granite Markers – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain stated that he has spoken to the former chair and an inventory was previously done.

6. Any other business to come before the Commission

a. Correspondence

There was no new correspondence.

b. Attendance

Next meeting is May 2, 2019.

c. Other

A discussion was held regarding communications between Boards/Committees and the roles of various Boards, Committees, and Commissions in weighing in on projects. Mr. Woodfin stated that he would contact Deputy City Manager Carlos Baia to discuss.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Spain motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. Mr. Woodfin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist