

HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting at Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, February 1, 2024.

Attendees: Chairman Richard Jaques, Vice-chair Jim Spain, Members Dr. Bryant Tolles Jr., Mike Dunn, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, and Alternate Althea Barton

Absent: Carol Durgy Brooks

Staff: AnneMarie Skinner, Acting City Planner
Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jaques at 4:32 p.m. Councilor Kretovic made a motion to seat Ms. Barton. Mr. Spain seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of minutes

Councilor Kretovic made a motion to accept the January 4, 2024 minutes as written. Mr. Dunn seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-chair; review of member terms

Ms. Skinner stated that the terms for Mr. Jaques, Mr. Spain, Mr. Dunn and Councilor Kretovic expire December 31, 2025. The terms for Mr. Tolles, Jr. and Ms. Durgy Brooks expire December 31, 2024. Ms. Skinner noted that Ms. Barton's term expired December 31, 2023; however, Ms. Barton has requested to be a regular member and that request is going to City Council for approval. Ms. Skinner stated that Ms. Barton will remain as an alternate until City Council makes the official appointment.

Mr. Jaques asked about Chair and Vice-chair appointments. Currently Mr. Jaques is Chair and Mr. Spain Vice-chair. Mr. Jaques stated that he would like to remain Chair. Mr. Spain stated he would like to remain Vice-chair. Councilor Kretovic made a motion for the slate of officers to be Mr. Jaques as Chair and Mr. Spain as Vice-chair. Mr. Dunn seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

4. New Business

a) Discuss July 2024 meeting date on July 4, 2024 – cancel or reschedule

Chair Jaques asked the Heritage Committee members if they would like to cancel the July 4th meeting or reschedule for the following Thursday?

Councilor Kretovic suggested to keep it in the calendar and if there is nothing that will go before the Commission to cancel.

Chair Jaques stated the July meeting will be on July 11th, and they will cancel if needed.

b) Ms. Barton has been thinking of the old Penacook Library building. She stated it has so much value to the community and well loved. She thinks the City is planning to put a preservation easement when they go to sell it. She wanted to know if they can send a recommendation to the City and have them work with the Preservation Alliance. Ms. Barton noted she wanted to make sure they have all the right language to protect the historical features of the building. Ms. Barton is not sure of the process for that.

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Councilor Kretovic stated maybe they should ask Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager, to come to the next meeting to discuss City plans for the building. She noted the intention is for City Council to sell the property so it can be redeveloped. They are not going to spend the money to make it accessible. The hope is to preserve the property.

Ms. Barton feels there is already some commitment from the City.

- c) Ms. Barton asked about a budget line item for Heritage Commission. She stated there might be something already in the ordinance for the Heritage Commission and there are funds in that account. Ms. Barton is thinking about the rewards program.

Chair Jaques asked for staff to review and get back to the Heritage Commission.

5. Demolition Review Committee – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain stated a formal application was made to demolish the Norris House, which triggered a message to Mr. Spain to complete a demolition review of the property. Mr. Spain noted two years ago they toured the building. Mr. Spain stated they should have a public meeting in City Council Chambers for the public to come and speak. Mr. Spain stated it is a very historic building. The Norris Mansion was the residential house of the people that owned the Norris Bakery. The building dates back to the pre-Civil War period. There are a lot of historic events that happened there. Mr. Spain wanted to make sure all Heritage Commission members would be able to attend the meeting on February 15, 2024.

Mr. Jaques asked for the start time of the meeting.

Councilor Kretovic suggested having the meeting begin at 5:15 p.m.

Ms. Barton stated that time does not work for her schedule. Ms. Barton suggested to have the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Spain stated they will schedule the public meeting for February 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Spain stated this meeting will need to be posted to the public.

Ms. Skinner will ask Ms. Hutton from City of Concord Code Administration to post the public meeting for the demolition review of the Norris House.

Councilor Kretovic asked for Ms. Breton, the City of Concord Public Information Officer, to post in the City Manager's Newsletter and on Facebook. Ms. Skinner will notify Ms. Breton accordingly.

6. Heritage Sign Program – Carol Brooks

Ms. Durgy Brooks was not present to report on this agenda item.

7. Planning Board Update – AnneMarie Skinner

Ms. Skinner had nothing to report.

8. Council Update – Councilor Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic stated the Commission remembers the paragraph with the demographic information containing the wrong history. The fiscal policy advisory committee approved a new demographic page that will be in the budget this year. When they revise the website with Ms. Breton that they take up their portion of the Concord history to write that for the website. Councilor Kretovic stated the document was riddled with inaccuracies.

Ms. Barton asked if there is a timeframe for the website re-build?

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Councilor Kretovic stated the current contract is coming to an end and a request for proposal needs to be made for a new contract for the website. If it is not this year, then it will be in the next six months after July 1st. Once the new contract is in place, then the website will be redone.

9. Old Business

a) Magnificent Ten – Honoring Architectural – Historic Buildings

Chair Jaques stated they will have their next meeting on February 15, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Barton spoke with the Preservation Alliance who will provide a generic packet of the process that was used in Wolfeboro to do an awards program similar to what the Heritage Commission is proposing. Ms. Barton asked how to send the information.

Chair Jaques stated Ms. Barton needs to send to staff.

Councilor Kretovic stated staff will then send to the Heritage Commission.

b) Gas Holder Building

Mr. Jaques asked if everyone read the article in the Concord Monitor?

Ms. Barton stated for the record that Liberty, which is the utility that owns the gas holder property, has committed \$2.4 million to preserve the building. Ms. Barton noted this is three years after they submitted plans to demolish the building. It is an historic 1888 national registered listed property. They worked with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and other agencies. The PUC authorized the commitment of this funding because it will help Liberty fulfill the state environmental requirement to cap that part of the property. It will contain the contamination. Ms. Barton stated preservation is the method they are using to achieve the remediation.

Chair Jaques stated they are not restoring the inside to make a museum. They are restoring it enough to make it structurally sound and safe.

Ms. Barton stated the building was near collapse. The Preservation Alliance and the City of Concord partnered with Liberty to form an emergency stabilization plan. A very complex engineered structure of steel was put inside it to support the roof and prevent it from falling over. That was completed last year. The goal of the next phase of the project is to restore the building to be able to stand on its own so it is as strong as it was when it was built. It is a very complex process. The cupola is tilted because the wind from the hurricane of 1938. The roof is damaged on that side. Then a few years ago a tree fell on that same part of the roof, creating a hole in the roof and further damage. The restoration process is to fix that, restore the slate on the roof, restore the cupola, and repair the compression ring around the top of the brick part that ties it together. Ms. Barton stated she is not sure how far the funding will go and there are plans in the works to secure more funding.

Mr. Dunn asked if the air quality will be remediated so you can go inside the building.

Ms. Barton stated the final use of the building has not been determined as it will still be owned by Liberty. Ms. Barton stated the air quality will depend on final use. Ms. Barton noted they are hoping the public can have some form of access or interaction with the site.

Councilor Kretovic stated when they first started having these conversations before the memorandum with the City, Liberty, and the Preservation Alliance they were talking about a greater vision for this whole area as a new gateway into the City of Concord.

Ms. Barton stated part of the goal of this is economic development and revitalization of that

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whole corridor. Ms. Barton will leave that up to the Preservation Alliance.

Councilor Kretovic stated they might want to involve the City Manager.

c) Website – Councilor Kretovic and Mike Dunn

Councilor Kretovic stated she has updates to complete. She noted when there is a demolition review permit the Heritage Commission photographs the site and put it on a photo repository website for the Heritage Commission. That way people can go to the website and look at the building even though it is no longer at the site.

d) Monuments and Granite Markers – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain stated he has been chasing missing cannons that were located in Penacook at Boudreau Square. He located a picture of the cannons. Mr. Spain stated Mr. Boudreau was the first soldier from Penacook killed in World War II and that square was named after him as a tribute. There has been construction over the years and the cannons disappeared.

Mr. Spain stated the only other post-Civil War cannons are located at Concord Blossom Hill Cemetery and encircle the early Civil War burial ground with the eleven soldiers. Those cannons were donated to the GAR by the federal government. The agreement was they would weld cannon balls into the cannon openings and they would alternate as a symbol of peace. One would be upside down and the other upright.

Councilor Kretovic stated the Eastman clock restoration will have a 100-year anniversary in June 2024.

Mr. Spain stated this summer marks the 100-year anniversary of when that was dedicated. Initially monies were provided privately by the Eastman family for their ancestor that was the first person to settle here, which is debated. Mr. Spain noted there were two or three other individuals that settled prior to their arrival.

Mr. Spain stated there are four clocks. It has stood at the same time for over 40 years.

e) Norris Mansion – Chair Jaques

Chair Jaques stated there is nothing to discuss as this was already brought up earlier in the meeting.

f) CSX Tower – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain has not talked to people that rallied around the friends of railroad. Mr. Spain wrote letter to CSX management back in October. He followed up with another letter. The local representative wrote back to Mr. Spain. They are working on alternatives and they will not rush ahead with the demolishing the building. There was an outcry from the public to save the building. They did not approve the demolition. It one of the last remaining pieces of history relating to our rich railroad history, which is quite grand in Concord. If you were not a quarryman at the quarries you worked for the railroad.

10. Other Business

a) Correspondence

Ms. Skinner had nothing to report.

Ms. Barton then asked to go to the new business agenda item 4

b) Attendance

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Chair Jaques asked who will attend in March. Everyone presently in attendance at this meeting will attend the March meeting.

11. Adjournment

Councilor Kretovic motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Spain seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Krista Tremblay
Administrative Specialist II