

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

December 2, 2010

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, December 2, 2010, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

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

Present at the meeting were Chairperson Philip Donovan, Vice-Chairperson Frederick Richards, and members Steve Shurtleff, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Robert V. Johnson, II, Carol Durgy Brooks, and James McConaha. [Committee members Dr. Bryant Tolles, Jr. and Marilyn Fraser arrived later in the meeting]. City Planner Douglas Woodward and Administrative Specialist Donna Muir were also present.

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

2. Minutes of the November 4, 2010 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the November 4, 2010, Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. McConaha to accept the minutes as presented and seconded by Mr. Shurtleff. Chairperson Donovan asked if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. Ms. Hengen asked that the minutes of the November 4, 2010, Heritage Commission meeting be changed to remove the words *National Register* from the third line in the first paragraph of Section 3. *New Business: a. Presentation on the CLG grant for the historic schools survey.* The motion was amended and seconded to reflect Ms. Hengen's requested change. The amended motion to accept the minutes of the November 4, 2010, meeting passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

- a. *Further consideration of an amendment to Section B-5, Voting, of the Heritage Commission's procedural rules relative to adding a requirement for members to meet a juror standard or to otherwise disqualify themselves from participation in any decision making when reviewing applications in the Historic District and applications for Demolition Delay.*

Chairperson Donovan stated that Mr. Woodward would provide an update to the Commission. Mr. Woodward stated that he had spoken with the City's Solicitor to invite him to a meeting of the Heritage Commission, so that questions and issues can be raised and a response provided by the Solicitor. The City Solicitor was unable to attend this meeting, but would try to be in attendance at a future Heritage Commission meeting. Chairperson Donovan stated that this item would remain on the table.

- b. *Update on the Technical Assistance Grant to the City from EPA to facilitate Sustainable Redevelopment of historic properties in Downtown Concord.*

Chairperson Donovan asked Mr. Woodward to update the Commission. Mr. Woodward stated that on December 13 & 14, 2010, representatives from EPA, the National Trust, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation would be in Concord to discuss the technical assistance grant. During their time in Concord, the group would be meeting with various

commissions and committees including the Heritage Commission. Mr. Woodward stated that he would send an email to the Heritage Commission to inform them of the dates and times of the scheduled meetings.

[Dr. Bryant Tolles arrived at 5:43 p.m.]

Mr. Woodward stated that the EPA is looking to create a model for other communities to use with the work they are doing in Concord. Mr. Woodward said that the EPA is hoping to wrap up this project by May 2011. Vice-Chair Richards asked whether EPA would be hiring private consultants for the project. Mr. Woodward explained that he thought they had consultants in mind for this project, but that no names had been mentioned.

[Ms. Marilyn Fraser arrived at 5:45 p.m.]

The EPA group also has a tour scheduled of downtown Concord, including the Phenix Hall, Northway Bank, and the Thorne's buildings. Mr. Woodward said that he would find out whether members of the Heritage Commission would be welcome to accompany the EPA group on the tour. He will email the Commission members to keep them apprised of the schedule.

4. Old Business

a. *Demolition Review Committee.*

Chairperson Donovan asked Vice-Chair Richards to update the Commission members regarding recent and upcoming Demolition Review Committee applications.

Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic Property: Vice-Chair Richards stated that the property on Pleasant Street in front of the Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic had been demolished.

North State Street Property: Vice-Chair Richards said that the City Engineering Division is preparing to have the property on North State Street demolished. At a previous Heritage Commission meeting, the City Engineer Ed Roberge presented information regarding the road work being done on North State Street and its affect on the culverts in the area as well as the Elgland property. The Commission discussed the history of the site. Ms. Hengen made a suggestion to have a local archeologist provide some history of the West Concord area as well as the Elgland site to the Commission. Mr. Woodward stated that according to Mr. Elgland is now living at a local retirement community. Mr. Woodward also stated that when he spoke with Mr. Elgland's niece, she had some of the history of the property and area. It was suggested that she be contacted to see if she would be interested in providing information or photos to the Heritage Commission, for submittal to the Concord Room at the City Library. Commission members agreed that the site was more historically significant than the building on the property.

[Mr. Johnson stated that he would need to recuse himself from any discussion regarding the demolition review of 23 Green Street. Chairperson Donovan suggested that any discussion of 23 Green Street take place at the end of the meeting, so that Mr. Johnson could partake in other Heritage Commission discussion before having to recuse himself.]

b. *Neighborhood Heritage Districts.*

Chairperson Donovan said that in light of the number of demolition review applications received in a short time frame, he would like to have a few volunteers from the Commission look into what it would take to create Neighborhood Heritage Districts and report back to the Heritage Commission. Ms. Hengen stated that the Demolition Review Ordinance is nine years old and this may be a good time to make revisions to it, while looking into the Neighborhood Heritage Districts. She volunteered to be a part of the committee.

Mr. McConaha said that this year provided a real opportunity for the Demolition Review Committee to realize that the power of persuasion doesn't go too far and that maybe it is time for the Committee to review the Demolition Ordinance, look into creating Neighborhood Heritage Districts, and be more proactive. He stated that the City, in the past ten years, has adopted a new "green" historic view toward the preservation of historic buildings, but there isn't a way of protecting these buildings with existing codes or regulations. Mr. Hengen suggested that in established Neighborhood Historic Districts, demolition permits can be denied. Mr. McConaha stated that the committee could also look at marking the City's tax maps for historic landmarks.

Ms. Brooks suggested that the name of the committee could be the Master Plan Regulatory Committee, and that the committee could be created as an umbrella to look at the Master Plan, as well as other applicable codes and ordinances, and landmark regulations.

Vice-Chair Richards, Ms. Fraser, and Mr. Johnson volunteered to join the committee.

Ms. Fraser suggested that the committee should look at other Heritage Commissions to learn about what others are doing in their communities. Dr. Tolles thought that this would be important.

Chairperson Donovan said that the committee is tasked with the following:

1. Review the Neighborhood Heritage District information
2. Look into creating an icon to be placed on the City's tax maps to identify historic landmarks or buildings
3. Review the Demolition Ordinance and suggest changes
4. Review the City's Master Plan
5. Review the activities of other Heritage Commissions
6. Report findings and suggestions back to the Heritage Commission

c. Heritage Sign Program.

Ms. Brooks updated the Commission on the Heritage Sign program. She stated that Sandy Dallaire has been volunteering to help market the sign program. She is working on a brochure for the sign program, and Ms. Brooks thought it would be appropriate for the cost of the printing of the brochure to come out of the Heritage Commission budget. She said that there will be a Sign Program Workshop on January 25, 2011, from 4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m., in the Concord Room, at the City Library.

d. School Consolidation Project.

Chairperson Donovan reported that he attended the Task Force 3 meeting regarding the disposal of the vacant school buildings resulting from the school consolidation project. He stated that the

discussion suggested that Dewey School may continue to house the School District and Dame School is being looked at for a possible City community center. It was touched upon that one of the remaining schools may be kept for future school growth. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be sent out for consultants to review possibilities for the five schools. Ms. Hengen stated that it would be important for the school survey forms to be included as background information for the discussion.

[Mr. Johnson left the meeting at 5:47 p.m.]

e. Demolition Review Committee (continued).

23 Green Street: Vice-Chair Richards discussed the public hearing which was held on November 29, 2010, regarding the demolition review of 23 Green Street. Commission members discussed that Concord Housing Authority wants to insure that their office location is accessible to those they provide services. They are looking to demolish the existing building and build a new building on the site. Mr. Woodward stated that it is his understanding that the basement ceiling will be kept at a lower height so that the mechanical equipment will be located there, but the basement space will not be used for office space. There was also some discussion about the American Smoke trees located on the property. Ms. Brooks asked if the City required an applicant to provide a cost comparison between rehabbing an existing building and building a new building. Mr. Woodward stated that there were no such requirements. Mr. McConaha suggested that the Chairperson of the Heritage Commission provide a letter to the Planning Board outlining some of the Commission's concerns relative to this building and its proposed demolition.

[Dr. Tolles left the meeting at 6:05 p.m.]

5. Other Business

Abbott Village Property: Chairperson Donovan asked about the status of the Abbott Village property. Mr. Woodward explained that the property had been foreclosed upon and bought by North – South Builders. He said that the buildings that currently exist were not going to change, but the buildings to be built may change a little in appearance. Ms. Brooks asked whether conditions of approval from the previous builder are carried forward to the new builder. She said that she was concerned about the granite pillars lining North State Street which were removed by the original builder, but were supposed to be put back. Mr. Woodward said that he would look into that and get back to the Commission. He also stated that he would follow-up with the new builders if resetting the granite pillars was in fact a condition of the original approval.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Ms. Brooks and seconded by Mr. Shurtleff to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist