

**HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2016**

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, March 3, 2016, 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, and Members Richard Jaques, Robert Johnson, and Fred Richards. City Planner Nancy Larson and (temporary) Planning Division Administrative Specialist Kate Kindel were also present.

2. Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2016:

Chair Donovan proposed some changes to the Draft Minutes: the last sentence under **Item 4d** to be deleted; the last sentence under **Item 5** to be deleted; also under **Item 5**, change “Woodhouse” to “Courthouse.”

The Chair moved to approve the February 4, 2016 Minutes with the designated corrections to be made, and the Committee unanimously approved.

3. New Business

a. CLG Grant follow-up: invited guest Nadine Miller, Preservation Project Reviewer; NH Division of Historical Resources

Ms. Miller was accompanied by Amy Dixon, who is newly replacing Deb Gagne, who will be retiring. Ms. Miller referenced an inquiry recently made by Ms. Larson about possible project funding, and Ms. Miller circulated a written overview of “Priority I Projects”, “Priority II Projects”, and “Priority III Projects”, and initiated a discussion of the available options. Each year, there is \$60,000-\$65,000 available for distribution to varying civil governments across the state, based on their applications and needs.

Ms. Miller also handed out the “2016 CLG Grant Program Cycle,” which provides the timeline from the initial letter of intent to finalization of project. The letter of intent can be submitted by email, and will include a brief cursory description of the proposed project, contact information, etc. Ms. Larson requested emails regarding the CLG Program be sent directly to her.

Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Miller if she could provide some creative ideas for a project; perhaps inspired by another community similar to Concord. Ms. Miller clarified that there “community-based” holistic options, which do not necessarily only address a historical district. She praised Concord’s work with the Barn study, as well as the Carriage House study. She mentioned a project in Wakefield, which revolves around historic Milling Sites, and which involves work both aboveground (i.e., maps and field assessments) as well as underground (archaeological surveys). She also referenced Exeter’s new Master Plan, which will update design guidelines for the town’s historic district and also for its Historic District Commission, under the recommendations made by a professionally-hired firm.

She stressed that CLG wants to hear really creative, “out-of-the-box” ideas. Chair Donovan described an idea which would identify Concord’s landmarks and noteworthy buildings, which are treasured by long-time area citizens, and asked about how something like this potential inventory could be initiated.

According to Ms. Miller, Priority I Projects are 100% funded, while Priority II & III Projects are matched on a 60/40 ratio.

She went on to suggest that media-driven public input would be integral: possibly this could be a “Public Awareness & Education” or “Preservation Planning” Priority I Project. The community could be inspired to nominate their favorite landmarks. She described their website’s GIS system (“MyNewHampshire”) whereby people can upload photos and discuss why they feel these are relevant to them and/or the community. While it’s too late to make the March deadline, a second round, to start in the fall, might provide more reasonable time for preparation.

Chair Donovan emphasized that he hopes such a project could be tied in with the Demolition Delay Ordinance. Ms. Miller suggested that this might be a two-grant process.

The idea of a neighborhood-centered project was discussed. Ms. Miller described how the town of Lebanon NH has received two grants to not only determine the character-defining elements of their neighborhoods, but also to survey them. Ms. Larson will call Margaret Howard-Heretakis, Associate Planner for Lebanon.

Ms. Miller noted that the amount of grant money apportioned to any given project may be determined by how many eligible applications are received each cycle. She suggested that the Commission come up with 2-3 ideas, which Ms. Larson can email to the GLG, which can then provide relatively quick feedback and guidance.

There was a general discussion about the Gasholder building, and Ms. Miller explained that this might be a Phase I National Register project, done with Liberty Utility’s agreement; then a Phase II Project could be done to perform a historic structure report. If the structure were to be owned by the City of Concord, then it may well then be a possible Phase III grant applicant. Ms. Miller noted that a lot of background information about this building already exists. There was a question about whether the structure must be owned by the City in order to do a historic structure report; Ms. Miller will research the answer to this question, and pass it along to Ms. Larson. Has a Historic Structure Report ever been done on the building?

As the Commission had no further questions, Ms. Miller and Ms. Dixon left the meeting at 5:15 PM with thanks for their information and input.

Chair Donovan asked if there was still time to get a letter about this to the City Council before the 3/14 meeting; Ms. Larson said she will check with Mr. Baia, but that she thought it was not too late. Mr. Richards and Mr. Jacques will do a letter of intent, because they felt this needs to be voted on sooner rather than later.

There was general agreement that the Gasholder project should take precedence. Chair Donovan reminded the Commissioners that they will still need Liberty’s verbal approval; he will speak with the Mayor, as his input is also needed.

There was general discussion with regard to “Plan B.” They agreed that there are no currently-pressing Historic District issues; the duplex project was mentioned, as well as a neighborhood study.

Mr. Woodfin mentioned the Concord Room at the Library; might the Heritage Commission want to create an electronic Archive along the same lines? Mr. Richards thought that might be worthy of some corporate sponsorship, and also appeal to professional as well as amateur Archivists and Curators. Mr. Johnson asked if this might be a good Phase I project; sell prints, perhaps, or make t-shirts, too. Mr. Woodfin will send more information about the Concord Room to both Chair Donovan and Ms. Larson. This could be linked to Concord Facebook groups. Mr. Richards pointed out that a \$10,000 grant could provide for a scanner, software, and online resourcing. Mr. Richards noted that those with a Library Science advanced degree at the Library may make hiring of Curators or Archivists unnecessary. Ms. Larson inquired: could we do this for the Gasholder Building? Mr. Woodfin mentioned a “time-lapse” photo documentation of that building might be interest-provoking.

Chair Donovan will send Ms. Larson a copy of the letter of intent for 3/14; this will indicate the Commission’s two priorities. On a motion made by Mr. Woodfin, and seconded by Mr. Jacques, a unanimous vote determined that the Commission’s first priority for a CLG project is the Gasholder building; the second priority is the Library Archive project. Mr. Richards commented that this will demonstrate to the DHR that the Heritage Commission has set a common definitive goal.

4. a. Demolition Review – Committee Report

Mr. Richards explained that there would be a Public Hearing on Monday 3/7/16 at the United Church of Penacook (in the church basement), 1 Community Drive, to discuss the impending demolition of the Beede House, 12-14 Washington St., by the American Legion, Post 31. The Legion wants to erect a new Post Hall, where they can hold group events. Zoning Board approval has been granted; it has been deemed “Urban Commercial.” The Demolition Review Committee has determined that this house is of local historic significance, and meets the criteria to hold a Public Meeting and receive community input. It was stressed that all pertinent viewpoints will be “heard, aired, and recorded.”

Chair Donovan clarified that there would not be any adjudicating; comments made must be related to finding a viable alternative to the demolition. The ground rules for this discussion will be clearly stated at the beginning of the meeting. This public hearing will occur so that hopefully, the Heritage Commission is able to present an alternative to the property owners. Ms. Larson stated that a new building will need variances, and have to go before the Planning Board. She also suggested that Mr. Richards call Chris Gentry, Concord Community TV, and see if he is able to videotape the meeting, although there will also be an audio recording.

Representing the Commission will be Mr. Donovan, Mr. Richards, Mr. Johnson, and Dr. Tolles. If any members of the Commission want to speak as an interested private citizen, they cannot sit with the committee that night. Mr. Woodfin commented that he thought none of the abutters had any forewarning about the proposed demolition.

b. An update on Demolition Permit Funding and Amendments to Demolition Delay Ordinance

This has been postponed until the April City Council meeting. Chair Donovan wondered about requiring a further delay until all permits have been fulfilled.

5. Informational Items - none

6. Any other business to come before the Commission

Ms. Larson has completed the FY 2017, including the \$1500.00 Program Change Request which needs to be approved by Deputy City Manager Baia and the City Council. She will be requesting to release \$5000 from the \$10,000 City Trust Fund; this is currently on the March City Council Agenda. That report will be available for anyone to peruse by the Friday before the Council meeting. According to Deputy City Manager-Finance Brian LeBrun, any of the funds not spent by 6/30/16 [end of Fiscal Year 2016] will revert back to the Trust. Ms. Larson will email specific details about this to Chair Donovan, and re-confirm her understanding with Mr. LeBrun. Three estimates will allow the Commission to move forward more quickly, as there is little time left.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Donovan adjourned the meeting at 6:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Larson
City Planner