

WOLFEBORO HERITAGE COMMISSION

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

Wednesday, April 12, 2017, 5 p.m.

Minutes – **Approved**

Members present: Chair Maggie Stier, Gene Denu, Wendy McHugh, Rob Aitcheson

Members/staff absent: Vaune Dugan, Cynthia Melanson, Anne Blodget, Board of Selectmen Liaison Dave Bowers

Staff Present: Director of Planning & Development Matt Sullivan, Recording Secretary Larissa Mulkern

Call to order: Chair Stier called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Public: John Simms, and Guest Speaker Rick Kipphut, Center Harbor Heritage Commission volunteer and Barn Survey Project Director.

Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes, as submitted, of the March 15 meeting was made, seconded and approved. Maggie suggested shorter minutes.

Public Comment: Mr. Simms reported all three warrant articles pertaining to the Freight House project were approved. His group is putting together a fund raising program to raise \$350,000 to \$400,000 for rehabilitation of the building and creation of a railroad model museum. He discussed potential funding sources, i.e. grants. The bulk of the funds will be raised through donations. A mailing to property owners is planned. He is filling out forms through the NH Division of Historical Resources to prepare an application to list the Freight House site on the state's historic register.

Barn Survey Presentation: Rick Kipphut, a graduate student from Plymouth State University and a volunteer with the Center Harbor Heritage Commission, is leading that community's Barn Survey Project. He handed out survey materials, including the listings and photographs. He described the background and methodology. Through the town clerk and tax collector, he located most of the barns in town. He sent postcards to the property owners requesting participating in the barn survey. He utilized the Farm Reconnaissance Inventory Form from NH Division of Historical Resources. Barn owners are then interviewed at the site, and the barn itself is extensively photographed and measured. Mr. Kipphut has completed surveys on about 10 out of the 80 barns of interest in Center Harbor; research will continue when many of the seasonal residents return to the area for the summer. He noted that he lets participating owners know the inventory is for the town's inventory of cultural and historic resources, and that most are happy to talk about their barns.

Mr. Denu described his experience surveying historic homes for the Wolfeboro Historical Society's files. In that case, 250 letters were sent out to owners of older homes, requesting information about the history and background of the properties. The return was a disappointing 10 to 15 percent.

Chair Stier asked about the pros and cons of conducting a survey with a team of volunteers versus one person doing it.

Mr. Kipphut said volunteers are great but you need one person to look at the big picture, one who can lead the project. One barn can take several days to research.

If a barn owner has questions about preservation he refers them to the NH Preservation Alliance. Overall, Mr. Kipphut said this was a fun project and that he is meeting great people and learning more about the town's history.

Heritage Commission members thanked Mr. Kipphut for his presentation.

Commission members discussed a smaller scale barn survey in Wolfeboro, perhaps one that would only identify barns for inclusion in a barn tour. Such a tour may raise interest and awareness about the barn preservation easement under New Hampshire statute RSA-79-D, which creates a mechanism to encourage preservation of barns and agricultural buildings whereby municipalities can grant property tax relief to owners who can demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their barns or other historic farm buildings.

Commission members discussed some of the logistical challenges in a town-wide barn survey. Why not hold a barn tour prior to a larger scale barn survey as a way to raise awareness of the survey and the NH RSA-79-D. The NH Preservation Alliance hosts a barn tour every two years and could be asked to partner with the Heritage Commission.

Mr. Denu offered to assist by assembling a list of some of the most interesting barns in town.

Other Business:

- Barn easement applications: Chair Stier said the town has two applications for easements under NH RSA 79-D, one at the 1810 House at 458 Center St., and the other at 332 North Main St. Town Manager Dave Owen invited the Heritage Commission to comment; the public hearing is May 3 before the Board of Selectmen. Chair Stier suggested members do a site visit to the barns and invite the Board of Selectmen. Features of both barns / properties were discussed.
- Preservation Consultant's query: Chair Stier said a preservation consultant is conducting an analysis of the old Texaco station [most recently Sal's gas station and repair shop], which is slated for demolition to make way for a new Citizen's Bank.
- New WHC Meeting time: Mr. Denu noted that he is not available for a 5 p.m. meeting starting on May 1. **Members agreed to change the meeting time to 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month starting with the May meeting [May 10].**

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Larissa Mulkern, recording secretary