

## WOLFEBORO HERITAGE COMMISSION

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room  
Wednesday, September 14, 2016, 7 p.m.  
Minutes – Draft

**Members and guests present:** Chair Maggie Stier, Vice Chair Anne Blodget, Members Vaune Dugan, Cynthia Melanson, Wendy McHugh, and seated as regular member, Selectmen Linda Murray seated for BOS Liaison Dave Bowers; guests John Simms and Eamon Dolan of Depot Square condominiums, Peter and Patty Cooke of the Pickering House and Ann Calvert of the North Wolfeboro Area Association

**Members absent:** Gene Denu, Harold Parker Sheryll Ross, Board of Selectmen Liaison Dave Bowers

**Staff present:** Town Manager Dave Owen and Recording Secretary Larissa Mulkern

**Call to order:** The meeting convened at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex Meeting Room.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the August meeting were approved as submitted.

**Public comment:** Mr. Simms and Mr. Dolan noted they were curious to know what if any plans are being considered for the area of the Foss Field playground and Freight House on the Wolfeboro Oil Company property, which they can see from the Depot Square condos.

<sup>the</sup> Ms. Stier welcomed guests and explained the Heritage Commission is not a regulatory body and has no authority to dictate what the Town does. The Commission serves as an advocate to protect and promote the heritage of Wolfeboro. The Commission may provide some input to the revision of the Town's Master Plan.

### Restoration Plans for the Pickering House

Peter and Patty Cooke, the new owners of the Pickering House, reviewed their plans to renovate the property into a bed and breakfast. The owners intend to submit an application under NH RSA 79-E, Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive. Mr. Owen said the Town is preparing <sup>the</sup> its application, currently in draft form, for the program. The enabling legislation passed by the State of NH in 2007, and currently adopted by 26 New Hampshire towns and municipalities, is designed to incentivize investment in older downtown structures. Mr. Owen said the application, which will go to the Board of Selectmen for approval, <sup>and</sup> requires a fair amount of information.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook reviewed their professional backgrounds in real estate, interior and exterior design and renovation. They have renovated their own home on North Main Street. They purchased the Pickering property out of a concern that when the price dropped, someone would purchase the property and tear it down, affecting the character of downtown. Their goal is to save and restore the house, which was built in the 1820s. To disseminate accurate information to the public, the Cookes set up a web site, [www.pickeringhousewolfeboro.com](http://www.pickeringhousewolfeboro.com), with the latest updates and background. They are pleased to have received 8,000 visitors to the site and messages and emails from supporters from around the country and as far as Germany.

They have conducted a building assessment and looked at potential uses for the property, including office, retail, apartment or condo use. They considered the options and decided that restoring the property to an Inn and restaurant would be a fitting use. They noted that WEDCO had conducted a lodging needs study that determined the Town of Wolfeboro could use more hotel or inn accommodations. The Pickering House had at one time been a boarding house and tavern. The interior had been hacked up over the years; extensive interior renovation is taking place. During the renovation, Patty found an old book listing "Sick Benefits" for the residents. An architectural historian was hired to conduct a historic assessment of the property.

The historic assessment will assist the Cookes in preparing their application to the State of New Hampshire Historic Preservation Officer. Peter added that looking at who the people were in the house can make the property historically significant. There is also the potential of applying for additional tax relief through the RSA 79-D section regarding historic barns. They are working with Jim Rines of White Mountain Survey to prepare a site plan that will eventually be submitted to the Planning Board. They met with the Technical Review Committee recently. The intent is to save the existing footprint. Patty is working on the floor plans.

Mr. Owen asked their thoughts on what to do with Bremmit Court, the gravel drive that connects to Cropley Hill Road. Peter said three houses have deeded access rights to the road and they have met with all three owners. Cropley Hill is steep and there is interest in having it maintained for access to Main Street. In the summer the neighbors struggle with cut through traffic. They have discussed the potential of installing a seasonal gate with the TRC.

In response to a query, the Cookes said they intend to be hands-on owners of the inn; they are developing a business model that supports having a general manager at the site.

Members discussed restoration versus replacement of features such as the fences and balusters. Peter and Patty are experienced in renovation, having restored their own 1850s home in Wolfeboro. They are connected with craftsmen experienced in historic renovation.

### **Freight House**

Ms. Stier updated the guests on the Freight House. Members did a walk through of Freight House recently and engaged a preservation contractor to look at building with an eye toward renovation. The Town of Wolfeboro has a Purchase and Sale Agreement, which has not been <sup>fully</sup> executed due to the seller not meeting the terms of the agreement [to remove the existing oil tanks from the lot]. The project is at a standstill.

Mr. Simms said he has read the engineering report from Bergeron and has talked to several people about the property. He has been told the asbestos tiles on the roof could be sealed rather than replaced. If the owner does the work himself there would be no need to conform to environmental regulations pertaining to lead paint removal.

Mr. Owen said the funds to purchase the property from Mr. Bean have been approved but the agreement has a contingency requiring the owner to remove that tanks, which he has not done. Warrant articles can be rolled over, but if there is no prospect of the owner completing his end of the deal, the funds may be returned to the taxpayers.

Mr. Simms and Mr. Dolan suggested the Freight House would be an ideal spot to relocate the Klickety Klack Railroad, currently on Elm Street. The current owner is looking to retire and sell the building. Discussion ensued about the potential of using the Freight House as the new home for the Klickety Klack Railroad. Comments included:

- The Town of Wolfeboro is not interested in running a museum, so the endeavor would have to be a private enterprise;
- Maintaining the model railroad is labor intensive;
- The exhibit is impressive and would attract tourists;
- More information is needed as to what it would take to remove the oil tanks;
- Heritage Commission members may help by making a few phone calls;

### **North Wolfeboro Area Association**

Ms. Calvert provided some background on the association, which is working to solidify its historic position in town with pursuing a spot on the National Register of Historic Districts. Ms. Stier said the commission is a resource and can provide assistance.

### **New Business**

Mr. Owen said the new town website is up, with <sup>new</sup> items posted for the Heritage Commission. He invited members to check it out. The search for a new town planner was expanded; the town received applications from several qualified candidates. The application deadline is September 30; a screening process will follow.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:  
Larissa Mulkern  
Recording Secretary