

## **WOLFEBORO HERITAGE COMMISSION**

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

Wednesday, May 10, 2017, 7 p.m.

Minutes – **Draft**

**Members present:** Chair Maggie Stier, Gene Denu, Wendy McHugh, Rob Aitcheson, Vaune Dugan, Cynthia Melanson, Anne Blodget

**Members/staff absent:** 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 7:02 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 12 meeting were approved as amended.

**Public input/announcements:** Mr. Sullivan reported that renovations at the Pickering House are fully under way; building permits are in place. He is working closely with developers. Regarding the former Bittersweet Restaurant property (barn on Route 28), he has heard nothing solid regarding redevelopment, and nothing new yet on the former Christian Science Reading Room property (downtown). Two applications to the Board of Selectmen for barn preservation easements passed unanimously at the board's last meeting. Chair Stier said she volunteered to take on the easement review role — annual monitoring — to make sure the properties are being maintained in accordance with the terms of the easements.

### **Old Business**

- Recap of barn preservation presentation by Rick Kipphut, Center Harbor: Chair Stier distributed packet of information that Mr. Kipphut had provided during the April meeting/presentation. [See minutes of April 12 meeting]. Discussion ensued about the next steps for the commission. Mr. Denu has done extensive research in the past and noted that Wolfeboro has six times the number of housing units, and likely barns, than Center Harbor. He questioned the commission's ability to undertake a barn survey in the detailed manner of Mr. Kipphut's project. He suggested selecting a smaller number of historic barns for a barn tour — there are many fine barn candidates in town. Chair Stier suggested partnering with the NH Preservation Alliance next year for a barn tour.

### **New Business**

- **Resource:** Ms. Dugan noted she spoke recently with former WHC member Sheryll Ross. Ms. Ross volunteered to assist the commission with projects as needed.
- **Building Plaque idea:** Mr. Bowers had previously suggested putting a descriptive plaque on some of the town's historic homes and buildings. Members discussed the logistics, pros and cons of a plaque/info program.

Some property owners would not agree to a plaque; participation would have to be voluntary. Mr. Denu described some mixed receptions from homeowners during the Wolfeboro Historical Society historic building survey project. Ms. Dugan suggested a plaque/ID program could be advertised in the newspaper; we can ask homeowners if they would like to participate. Chair Stier acknowledged that administrating such a program is difficult. The City of Newburyport, Mass., has a program where there is a formal admissions program; buildings must meet standards of integrity. She suggested tabling this idea for the time being.

- **Work Plan:** Mr. Sullivan provided guidance on creating a strategic work program for the WHC. The commission is discussing many ideas and programs and we don't want those ideas to fall through the cracks. He suggested developing a work plan from month to month. One priority may be to work on the Cultural and Historic Resources chapter for the updated Master Plan [being conducted in two phases] — the Heritage Commission will be a critical stakeholder group. Another project could be the creation of a database, an inventory of historic resources. Members discussed content and format of such a database. Mr. Sullivan shared information about the City of Londonderry's database and mapping of historic resources. This data is important for the Planning Board as they look towards historic preservation. He suggested starting with the Assessing Department database, sort and pull data into the GIS, and color code it. He offered to do this and bring a sample to the next meeting. Chair Stier outlined two different types of [historical] building/asset surveys: the first is a reconnaissance or 'windshield' survey and the second is an intense survey, conducted on foot; the second documents physical attributes and eligibility for historic register listing. It includes deed research and a bibliography — and is customarily done by a consultant with assistance from volunteers. Another approach is to take on a survey of an area versus individual buildings. Mr. Aitcheson, who has worked with the landmarks commission in another state, described his work for the master planning process where over 1,800 historic resources were identified, then categorized. The main thing that showed was what the town was losing as structures were demolished. He recommended rating the town's historic resources in categories from one to four, for example. This method can be digitized. Ms. Melanson expressed concern that Heritage Commission surveys not affect the assessed property values. She asked what date would be used in the event of a modern day addition to a historic property. Mr. Sullivan noted that creating the map with the original date plus the date of any additions would take considerable staff time. He can get some information from Assessing and suggested putting together a basic map with properties dated in 50-year increments. Mr. Sullivan suggested starting with a general historic timeline of Wolfeboro for inclusion in the master plan. Mr. Denu provided a history for the 1980 master plan and will provide a copy to Mr. Sullivan and the commission. Chair Stier said the built resources tell the stories of Wolfeboro and its heritage with regards to the railroad, manufacturing and agriculture industries, and summer tourism. She

added that the State of New Hampshire has only surveyed a small portion, 20-25 percent, of its historical resources and that no state grants are provided for such surveys.

- **Town Website:** Mr. Sullivan asked members to bring items to be posted to the WHC page on the town's website to the next meeting.
- **Other:** Mr. Aitcheson noted there may be national funding for a historic survey – he will look into that. There might be funding sources if there is an established plan, such as for a town-wide survey.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was moved, seconded, voted on and passed at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:  
Larissa Mulkern  
Recording Secretary