

Wolfeboro Heritage Commission

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

August 9, 2017, 7 p.m.

Minutes - Draft

Members present: Chairman Maggie Stier, Wendy McHugh, Cynthia Melanson
Anne Blodget, Gene Denu and Board of Selectmen Liaison Dave
Bowers

Members absent: Vaune Dugan and Rob Aitcheson

Staff present: Town Manager Dave Owen, Director of Planning & Development
Matt Sullivan and Recording Secretary Michele Chamberlain

Call to order:

Chairman Stier called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Public Input:

Chairman Stier suggested that, in the absence of public members being present, this time be used to share some of the things we have seen in town relating to our historic resources. She brought up progress on the Pickering House rehabilitation, and another member noted that while some people are sorry that the historic tree had to be removed, many are grateful for the overall project. Mr. Owen said he thought the Cookes had decided against applying for the federal preservation tax credit. There are stringent federal standards for this program, which is administered by the NH Division of Historical Resources. Mr. Owen stated the Cookes will be using RSA 79-E, a town-based tax relief incentive that allows the property to be assessed at its pre-rehabilitation value for five years.

Mr. Owen stated that the two barn preservation easements approved by the selectmen have been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

Stier noted that it was interesting to see the Yum Yum Shop plastered with signs indicating how much the bakery is missed. Ms. Melanson said the building is under contract.

Ms. McHugh noted that the Wolfeboro Diner is closed and will probably reopen but it will be a while, and that the NH Boat Museum Tour is tomorrow in Meredith.

Freight House:

Chairman Stier reported that she had recently met with John Simms of The Lakes Region Model Railroad Museum, and shared the Investment Package that he had put together to begin to raise funds for the renovation of the town-owned building and creation of the museum. He has applied for two grants and is still waiting to hear back about the LCHIP one; he was recently notified that the other was not funded.

Mr. Owen stated G.A.L.A was successful with that funder, the Northern Borders Regional Commission.

Chairman Stier asked if the Heritage Commission wanted to help raise visibility for the project. She explained that there are two components to their vision -- a model railroad layout that shows Wolfeboro in its RR heyday, and an interactive layout of model trains using cutting-edge technology. She suggested perhaps giving recognition to our railroad heritage with a walking tour of railroad station sites.

Mr. Owen asked about the progress of listing the Freight House on the State Register.

Chairman Stier reported she had met with the NH Division of Historical Resources and was given copies of the pages in the on-file inventory form that need revisions. She will do that work soon, and submit them, along with a form that the Town Manager needs to sign. The Board of Selectmen has already voted and given their approval for allowing the Freight House to be listed on the State Register. Stier said that once listed, an official sign (made of aluminum) can be purchased for \$50. She suggested having a ceremony and open house when this is installed.

There was discussion of other ways that the Commission might help, either as a group or individually. Mr. Denu suggested that perhaps the Historical Society could link to the RR Museum's website or Facebook page.

Heritage Commission Website: Chairman Stier asked Mr. Sullivan to show the Commission the Town website with the Heritage Commission's skeleton outline. Mr. Sullivan described the seven different areas – About the Heritage Commission, Downtown Walking Tour, History of Wolfeboro, Links and Other Resources, Maps and Photos, Researching Your Historic Property, Saving Historic Barns and Wolfeboro Success Stories. Stier noted that almost all of these sections lack content and asked members if they would sign up to provide this. The following assignments were made:

About the Heritage Commission – Matt Sullivan

History of Wolfeboro – Dave Bowers (1800 – 1950) and Gene Denu. Denu has done history before 1800 and it's already posted.

Links and Other Resources – Matt Sullivan will do the links - Maggie Stier to supply content

Maps and Photos – Dave Bowers

Researching Your Historic Property – Gene Denu (Historical Society)

Saving Historic Barns – Maggie Stier will supply links to NH Preservation Alliance materials that were presented at the barn talk they gave several months ago

Wolfeboro Success Stories – Anne Blodget (Town Hall), Wendy McHugh (Railroad Station), Cindy Melanson (Pickering House), Maggie Stier (Barns under Easement), Maggie Stier (Freight House).

Dave Bowers suggested a link for famous visitors, which prompted a discussion about the role of the Heritage Commission. Stier stated the Commission's purpose is assisting the town by providing information and resources to help maintain the historic character of the town, which means the historic buildings and other aspects of the physical environment.

Consideration of a 2018 barn tour or other upcoming activities:

Stier asked if there was still interest in working on a barn tour for 2018. She also noted that the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance is planning to come to Wolfeboro in October of 2017 to present the Seven to Save List. Mr. Owen will check on their booking of the Town Hall, which is not yet on the calendar.

Stier suggested that the Heritage Commission could assist with this event by offering to coordinate a pre-event tour to perhaps three locations: the Pickering House, and the Town Hall, which were former Seven to Saves, and the Freight House.

Ms. Blodget suggested this tour seemed more appropriate and opted for focusing on barns at a later date. Mr. Bowers suggested working on a driving tour of Wolfeboro. Mr. Denu was concerned with liability issues. Stier suggested that a driving tour to already-identified historic sites with safe access would be relatively easy, and that she would prepare an outline for our next meeting.

Budget requests:

Mr. Owens outlined how the budget process for town commissions is structured. Currently, there is no budget line for the Heritage Commission and the Commission's recording secretary is being paid out of the Selectmen's budget.

Mr. Owen asked if the Commission needed money for something. He stated the Commission would have to put the information forward and they would have to justify it to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

Stier asked about hiring a consultant to conduct a survey of historic resources in Wolfeboro by area and district, information that could be used in the upcoming Master Plan. Mr. Bowers said he felt this was not necessary, Gene Denu agreed, citing extensive Historical Society research.

Mr. Sullivan offered sound reasoning for not requesting funding for a consultant at this time so as to avoid potential conflicts with Planning Board requests. Mr. Sullivan stated he thought the Heritage Commission should have a budget line available for the future.

The Commission discussed possible items for the budget including secretary costs, training costs, travel costs and potential events for the community.

It was moved by Anne Blodget and seconded by Gene Denu to seek \$500 in the budget for community education functions or for Board education. Mr. Owen stated the budget requests have to be specific. Mr. Sullivan stated he could work on the details.

Chairman Stier stated we need money for three plaques for three State Register sites in town (\$150) and training for Commission members.

Ms. Blodget offered to go with Stier to the Budget Committee. Mr. Sullivan suggested stating supporting historic plaques and the Commission's activities in the motion.

It was moved by Anne Blodget and seconded by Gene Denu to seek \$500 in the budget for the Wolfeboro Heritage Commission for education and outreach to be specified. Members voted and being none opposed, the motion passed.

Discussion followed about the purposes and methodology of a survey of historic properties in Wolfeboro. Mr. Denu expressed his opposition to hiring anyone to do windshield surveys because he has done much of this work already, identifying 360 sites that he considers of historic interest.

Chairman Stier asked if those sites had been photographed or mapped so there would be a way to easily evaluate their architectural significance and integrity and see what overall patterns of settlement they form. Chairman Stier stated a professional consultant could do that but both Bowers and Denu reiterated that they felt no consultant was necessary.

Mr. Denu stated the Historical Society will be offering guided Historic Walking tours of Downtown Wolfeboro every two weeks. There will be a walking tour this Saturday at 10:00 am. The pamphlets are available at the Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Stier opted to table further discussion of this topic. Bowers agreed that the Heritage Commission should promote the walking tours and the sample brochure done several years ago that Denu showed the group. Mr. Sullivan posted the pamphlet to the Heritage Page on the Town website.

New Business:

Stier stated she was concerned with renewing our ranks and believed Rob Aitcheson was no longer interested in being a member. She proposed Glenn Knoblock and said he had shown some interest. The Commission agreed he would be an excellent candidate for the Heritage Commission.

Chairman Stier then shared with the Commission information about the efforts of the North Wolfeboro Area Association to determine if that area of town could qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The outcome was that their consultant determined it did not, but they have reached out to Stier to learn more about what else they can do to call attention to their historic resources—which their consultant assured them are still significant.

Anne Blodget suggested having one of their members join the Heritage Commission. While there are no current vacancies, there are openings for alternate members.

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved by Cindy Melanson and seconded by Wendy McHugh to approve the minutes of June 14, 2017 as written. Anne Blodget abstained. Members voted and being none opposed, the motion passed.

Chairman Stier stated the next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

It was moved by Anne Blodget and seconded by Chairman Stier to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Members voted and being none opposed the motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michele Chamberlain