

HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2019

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting at Council Chambers, 41 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, June 6, 2019.

Attendees: Present at the meeting were Chair Richard Jaques, Vice-Chair Jim Spain, Councilor Allan Herschlag, Members Carol Durgy Brooks, Bryant Tolles, and Bob Johnson.

Absent: Rich Woodfin, Alternate Mike Dunn, and Alternate Sarah Galligan

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist

Guests: City Engineer David Cedarholm and Elizabeth Hengen

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

Chairman Jaques called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

This item was postponed to later on in the meeting.

3. New Business

a. Sewall's Falls MoU – Mr. Cedarholm and Ms. Hengen

Ms. Hengen provided an update as to potential sign design options. She proposed a sketch layout that included railroad history, iconic station images, building information, interior photographs, and statistical information.

The presentation was well received by the Commission members. Members thanked Ms. Hengen for her work. She will continue to update the Commission as the work progresses.

2. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of March 7 and May 2, 2019

A discussion was held regarding the March meeting minutes. Ms. Brooks moved to approve the version of the March 7, 2019 minutes that she originally reviewed, as amended. Councilor Herschlag seconded the motion. The motion passed; 5/0/1. Mr. Johnson abstained.

Ms. Brooks moved to approve the minutes of May 2, 2019, as written. Mr. Spain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously; 6/0.

The minutes of May 7, 2019 will be addressed at the July meeting.

3. New Business

b. East Concord Marker – update

Mr. Johnson stated that a mockup of the proposed sign is to be presented at an additional meeting. He requested that the items remain on the agenda.

c. Abbott Village – update

Ms. Shank stated that she and Code Administrator Mike Santa did a site visit with Jason Garland, representing the Abbott Farm, LLC, which included a walkthrough of the building. She stated that she did take some pictures and overall, she felt that although there is some damage to the building, it did not appear to be in such poor condition as to require total demolition. She noted that there are some indications that there were repairs completed before the current owners took possession, including improvements to the garage. Ms. Shank relayed that according to Code, the

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broken windows should be boarded to secure the building, which could also minimize damage from the elements. Commission members noted that this is a historical building and every effort should be made to preserve the Abbott House.

Members questioned whether the City had any recourse if the owner does not make repairs. It was suggested that there be a request made to the Planning Board to reach out to the City Solicitor to determine whether there is any legal recourse that can be taken to prevent any additional damages from occurring.

Councilors Herschlag made a motion to send a letter to the Planning Board suggesting that they ask the City Solicitor what steps the City can take to enforce the requirement that the developer restore the Abbott House. Mr. Spain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously; 6/0. A copy to be sent to the Code office.

4. Demolition Review Committee Report – Bob Johnson

Mr. Johnson reported that a public hearing was held today relative to the demolition of the last remaining building on the tannery site in Penacook. It was a unanimous decision of the DRC to grant approval of the demolition. He added that Ms. Brooks, and Mr. Jaques were in attendance.

Councilor Herschlag expressed frustration with the fact that the brick building would be torn down.

5. Heritage Sign Program – Carol Brooks

Ms. Brooks stated that there is nothing new to report.

6. Old Business

a. Demolition Delay Ordinance

Mr. Johnson provided an update of the work session to make revisions to the demo delay ordinance, noting that it was a productive meeting. Some changes were agreed to and there is a need for additional meetings.

Ms. Shank stated that Mr. Santa will be retiring soon and there are other items that she is now working on like the zoning update. She is not sure when this item will be addressed but there no longer seems to be a need to do it quickly. However, she encouraged members to continue to meet and keep up the momentum. Mr. Johnson asked why the administration does not support a longer delay period. Ms. Shank noted that staff is only relaying what seems to be the interests of the Council, the public, and the business community. She noted that staff is not in favor of making recommendations to Council that do not represent our understanding of what the community wants. She noted that staff has not received any feedback indicating that a longer delay period was desirable. She also stated that there may need to be a larger conversation to address this issue to determine whether that sentiment has changed, but until that happens, staff is not inclined to recommend such a major change to the delay period.

Councilor Herschlag stated that developers know what they want to do with a property more than 90 days prior to tearing down a building, so the 90 day period should not be a hardship. He would like to invite developers to a discussion to help them understand how the demolition process works. He added that it is important for discussions to be held to understand the goal of the process, otherwise people may feel that the process is difficult or that the Commission is being difficult. It is important for all parties to be on board in order to move forward with any ordinance changes.

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Councilor Herschlag stated that administration does not want road blocks for development. He added that he does not see this as a road block or resistance. Ms. Shank asked what the will of Council is. Councilor Herschlag replied that it is his opinion that City Council wants premium development and by demolishing what we have it discourages interest in developing the community.

Councilor Herschlag stated that extending the timeframe allows time for community input and a greater opportunity for communication. He suggested that the applicants be invited to a Commission meeting.

Mr. Jaques stated that it is not necessary to have that discussion. He suggested reviewing history, check the recent demos and see how long it took to demolish the buildings; most are months later.

A work session was scheduled for June 11, at 4:30 PM for further discussion on the demolition delay ordinance.

b. CLG Grant

Ms. Shank stated that the City was not chosen for the grant. She asked CHR staff to weigh in on how the application can be improved in the future.

c. Historic Photo Repository – Rich Woodfin

Nothing new to report.

d. Monuments & Granite Markers – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain stated that this is an ongoing project. He expressed some frustration when monuments are relocated without notification. He will continue to work on the project.

7. Any other business to come before the Commission

Next meeting is July 11, 2019.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Brooks motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Mr. Spain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist