

TOWN OF RYE – HERITAGE COMMISSION
THURSDAY, January 5, 2017
6:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall

Members Present: Chairman James Tegeder, Mae Bradshaw, Rich Davis, Chris Remick, Peter White, Bev Giblin, Alex Herlihy and Selectmen's Rep Priscilla Jenness.

Also present: Mark Pesci

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Tegeder called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REPORTS

- Treasurer/Fund Raiser Update – Peter White

Member White noted that he was unable to get an updated report for the meeting. The Finance Director has been busy with upcoming budget meetings and end-of-year book closeouts.

Member Bradshaw noted that she has written thank you notes for approximately \$2,200 in money that was raised for the annual appeal.

Member White pointed out that the donations are all unrestricted funds. The cost of preparing and sending the fundraiser was about \$1,000., which was covered by the commission's budget. He will have an update on the commission's financials for the next meeting.

III. PROJECT UPDATES

- Farragut Hotel Update – James Tegeder

Chairman Tegeder noted that he sent an email to the property owner in regards to the starting fees for the project. He has not heard back at this time. He noted that Mark Pesci is the first volunteer for the Farragut dig project.

Member Bradshaw commented that the dig will be starting in April or May. The months leading up to the dig will be used for the research. The owners are being asked to pay the starting costs and the Heritage Commission will be fundraising for the rest. The total cost of the project is \$8,000. The owner has agreed to pay the starting fees of \$2,800.

Member White asked if there was discussion with the property owner in regards to who would own the extracts.

Member Herlihy stated that the owner has said that he would like to see the items go to the Historical Museum for the public to enjoy. The owner may keep a few samples for himself.

IV. NEW PROJECTS

- Town Hall/Voter Information

Selectmen's Rep Jenness stated that the Selectmen voted to create a bond proposal for the Town Hall Project. There will be a bond hearing on January 17th. Request for Proposals were sent to four contractors, who had been vetted very thoroughly through past Town Hall Committees. Only one contractor, Hutter Construction, submitted design build plans to the town. The town requested two plans from the contractors. One for a renovation and one for a tear down and rebuild for 8,000sf, which is down from 11,000sf two years ago. The Selectmen voted to go with the tear down and rebuild; as close to a replica as possible. The intent is to build in the footprint that is shown in the design build plan, while trying to retain as much of the exterior as possible. This is design build so the interior partitions are not set in cement. When all is said and done, the town will have something that resembles what is existing now; however, it will be all new construction.

Member Bradshaw commented that Selectman Musselman stated that the cost difference between the new and the old renovation, was closed somewhat by the changes that might be made with the renovation. The request for the two options was to show the difference in pricing for renovation versus building new. There are also soft costs that would need to be added to the proposals for a total project cost.

Member Davis commented that he thought the two options were going to go to the town. He thought that the Heritage Commission was given two options at their previous meeting.

Member Bradshaw stated that the Selectmen asked the Heritage Commission what they thought of the plans; not what was liked better. The Selectmen were looking for the commission's input on each of the plans. The commission sent a detail letter about their thoughts. Overall the outside of the building looked nice and the commission was happy that the addition was subservient. She noted that this is the letter she wrote to the Selectmen that everyone agreed on. She continued that the meeting on the 3rd had a room full of people who wanted to tear down the existing building and were committed to building new.

Member Giblin stated that this feels like an interception and she is shocked.

Member Bradshaw stated that the voters are not going to vote it down, unless they hear a lot of reasons why they should not. She noted that it is important for commission members to show up at these meetings to voice their opinions. She continued that the Selectmen have a job to do. They could choose to do nothing or put out a warrant article in the time that they have to do it. They also have to get the bond notice out and hold a bond hearing.

Member White noted that at the Heritage Commission's previous meeting, there was a vote taken to refurbish Town Hall. He asked the outcome of that vote.

Chairman Tegeder replied that it was unanimous.

Member Bradshaw stated that this information was passed on to the Selectmen. The two Selectmen who decide how to proceed, were sitting at the meeting listening to a very different message from the people who were there. She noted that the Heritage Commission has to draft a warrant article if they would like to have one submitted for the Deliberative Session and town vote. She feels the commission has to come

up with something to save the building from demolition. She pointed out that there are pieces of this project that may qualify for grants if the town renovates the existing building. Grants would not be available with new construction. This would actually be an incentive for renovation.

Chairman Tegeder noted that he spoke with NH Preservation Alliance and they have a field worker that can work with the Heritage Commission on drafting a warrant article.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to contact the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance immediately to seek their help. Seconded by Beverly Giblin. All in favor.

Member Bradshaw reviewed the process and timeframe for submitting a warrant article.

Member White stated that he would like to look at what features the warrant article would embrace.

Member Bradshaw commented that at a minimum it should say “no demolition”. She continued that the existing building is not American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. If someone sues, it is going to be very expensive for the town and that needs to be fixed. The warrant article is going to involve money so it will need to be reviewed by the Budget Committee. The dollar amount has to be included in the warrant article.

Chairman Tegeder suggested putting in a historic fact about the building to give the public some information. Maybe something about how the State has named it one of the seven most important buildings to save, as a historic resource by the NH Preservation Alliance. He pointed out that last time the title ‘Seven to Save’ confused a lot of people and it was misspoken about every time. He noted that the Preservation Alliance has confirmed that the building will always be a ‘Seven to Save’ now that it has been designated. He stated that the building is one of the last original buildings in the center of town. There are not many left. It is like the heart of the town.

Member White asked if they should talk about the historical features; the tin ceilings and curvilinear stairs.

The commission agreed that the features should be included.

Member Bradshaw suggested saying the features not be altered in any permanent way. It may be that the stage won’t be seen; however, it could still function in a way that it can be used and not destroyed. Something may need to be used in a different way but not destroyed so it can be preserved.

Member White reviewed the ideas discussed for the article:

- No demolition
- ADA compliant; (includes elevator and completion of other requirements)
- Important building saving Rye Center
- Historical features not permanently altered; including the stairway, tin ceiling and stage.

Member Bradshaw suggested adding that there will be grants sought by the Heritage Commission to pay for some of the renovation that is eligible for funds. She asked if the commission is saying that they want to take Hutter Option number 1, where the costs are known, to draft into a warrant article. She clarified that they could take the Selectmen’s Warrant Article, mirror it, give it some support for “why” and use Hutter’s figure.

Selectmen’s Rep Jenness noted that to do that a bond would be required.

There was discussion on whether they could “piggyback” on the other bond because it is a lower number being proposed.

Peter Crawford, 171 Brackett Road, noted that petitioned warrant articles that include a bond are due on January 6th (the day following this meeting).

The members agreed to work on drafting a warrant article for the remainder of the meeting.

Proposed Warrant Article:

To see if the town will vote to authorize the Rye Selectmen to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,300,000 gross budget for renovation of the Rye Town Hall with due consideration of the historic features and further direct the Selectmen to authorize the pursuit of available grants to defray the cost of the renovation.

Rye Town Hall is listed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places and was designated as one of the Seven to Save Endangered Historic Properties for 2015 by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget. (60% vote required.)

**Motion by Peter White to approve the draft warrant article. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw.
Vote: 7-0-1 Abstained: Priscilla Jenness**

The commission continued to work on the wording of the warrant article.

To see if the town will vote to authorize the Rye Selectmen

- to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,200,000 gross budget for the purpose of renovating the Rye Town Hall 1839 building with due consideration of the historical features**
- and to construct pursuant to Option 1-Historic Renovation submitted by Hutter Corporation on December 8, 2016**
- to authorize the borrowing of up to \$3,200,000 through the issuance of not more than \$3,200,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (N.H. RSA Chapter 33 as amended)**
- to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes, to determine the rate of interest thereon, and to take such actions as may be necessary to effect the issuance, negotiation, sale and delivery of such bonds or notes as shall be in the best interest of the Town of Rye,**
- to apply for and accept and expend Federal and State Grants and any private donations toward this purpose, and**
- to direct the Selectmen to authorize the pursuit of available grants to help defray the cost of renovation.**

Rye Town Hall is listed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places and was designated as one of the Seven to Save Endangered Historic Properties for 2015 by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

(3/5 ballot vote required.) This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the warrant article as revised. Seconded by Peter White.
Vote: 7-0-1 Abstained: Priscilla Jenness**

The members agreed to meet the next day to collect resident signatures for the warrant article and to sign the typed article.

Member Bradshaw stated that she has received the name of Annie DeCosta, that has a firm that runs campaigns. She asked the members if they would like her to contact Ms. DeCosta to see how much it would cost to run a campaign to promote their warrant article.

Motion by James Tegeder to authorize Mae Bradshaw to speak with Annie DeCosta about the process and costs for public relations and campaign for the proposed warrant article. Seconded by Rich Davis. All in favor.

V. NEXT MEETING

- February 2, 2017 at Rye Town Hall
(Archaeologist and Volunteers in attendance)

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **January 9, 2017, Board of Selectmen Meeting, 6:30 p.m.** – Town Hall to be discussed
- **January 23, 2017, Board of Selectmen Meeting, 6:30 p.m.** – Town Hall to be discussed
- **February 4, 2017, Rye Deliberative Session, 9:00 a.m.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Alex Herlihy to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger