

# **TOWN OF RYE – HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**Thursday, May 4, 2017  
6:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall**

*Members Present: Chair Bev Giblin, Vice-Chair Rich Davis, Mae Bradshaw, Peter White, James Tegeder, Chris Remick and Alex Herlihy.*

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Giblin called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **II. Introduction of Members**

Chair Giblin led the introduction of members present.

## **III. Approval of Minutes**

- **April 6, 2017**

**Motion by Peter White to approve the minutes of April 6, 2017 as presented. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw. All in favor.**

## **IV. Reports:**

- **Discussion with David Choate, NH Preservation Alliance Board Member**

**David Choate, NH Preservation Alliance Board Member and Rye Resident**, noted that he and Member Bradshaw met with the Selectmen on April 24<sup>th</sup> and had a discussion on garnering their support on finding non-taxpayer money for improving the Town Hall. NH Preservation Alliance is making a presentation to the Selectmen at their meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The presentation will focus on grants that may be available and how other communities have upgraded their town halls with little or no taxpayer money. Materials will be sent to the Selectmen for their review before the meeting from the Preservation Alliance. He continued the L-Chip Grant has a tight schedule for submitting an application. The grant workshop was held on May 4<sup>th</sup> and the commission may be able to request a waiver from this. The application deadline is in June.

Chair Giblin will follow up with the Preservation Alliance regarding the waiver. The intent to apply is due May 19<sup>th</sup>, which is a one page description of the project.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to file an intent to apply and waiver request at the same time. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

Mr. Choate stated that the Heritage Commission is proposing to stabilize the building to the point where the interior could be repurposed for something else. He pointed out that Selectman Musselman seems pretty convinced that there is a good chance that the Town Hall will move to the middle school.

Member Bradshaw commented that he acknowledges that this may be a five year process.

All members of the Heritage Commission are encouraged to attend the Selectmen's meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Member White asked if they should consider having an architectural preservationist look at the building.

Mr. Choate stated that he can speak with the Preservation Alliance about who would do this type of work and get a proposal; however, he is not sure what they are asking them to propose on. He thinks that the scope of work for a preservation architect is to look at the process that is needed for preserving the exterior of the building, not the interior at this time. The work that needs to be done should be prioritized. Maybe the painting of the building would be the last step in the process. He will follow up with the Preservation Alliance in regards to information about the preservation architect.

Member Bradshaw noted that this may be a good first Moose Grant. She pointed out that an L-Chip Grant is a matching grant; however, the Moose Plate Grant is a flat \$10,000 grant.

Member Herlihy asked if everyone agrees that the priority is the exterior of the building first.

Mr. Choate replied that this is the most palpable. The interior's future use is in flux.

The members agreed.

Mr. Choate stated that he was very clear with the Selectmen that they need to proceed in a slow and methodical way to see how far this will go. The goal is to preserve the exterior of the building.

Member Bradshaw stated that a gentleman approached her at the Preservation Alliance Conference and introduced himself. This gentleman is a repurposing expert. The company is ADG and the gentleman is Stuart Arnett. He is interested in speaking with the Heritage Commission about repurposing when they are ready. She continued that the Selectmen's representative to the Heritage Commission, at the first meeting of the season, charged the commission with looking for some buyers for the building so that it could be repurposed. She

commented that the Heritage Commission is not bound by that charge. However, if there is any interest in that charge, then someone who does repurposing work for historic properties may come to a meeting to discuss this idea.

Mr. Choate asked if the commission has thought about speaking with the Selectmen about having a preservation easement on the building. The Preservation Alliance has done this recently on a house in Orford, New Hampshire. Basically, the Preservation Alliance is the holder of the easement, which helps to preserve the building.

Member White asked how the easement would come into play.

Mr. Choate commented that he believes the Selectman can accept the easement. He does not think it has to go to town meeting.

Member Bradshaw stated that in Rye there is a very active Historic District Commission and Heritage Commission. She would rather see the easement stay with the Heritage Commission, if not ownership of the building entirely.

Mr. Choate commented that owners within the Historic District who do not want their homes changed by new owners, may be willing to give a preservation easement on their property. He noted that he is going to have the Preservation Alliance discuss preservation easements on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

- **Treasurer's Report**

Member White noted that the commission's cash balance, as of April 30<sup>th</sup>, was \$12,747.81. Since March, there was a transaction that reduced the restricted town hall funds by \$250.00, which was a reimbursement to Ms. Holway for her contribution. There was also interest income of \$2.54. He continued that the commission's annual budget is \$3,800. The commission has spent 27% of the budget through April with 73% of the budget remaining.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to accept the Treasurer's Report for the month of April.  
Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

## **V. Project Updates**

- **Historic Property Inventory**

Member Bradshaw submitted to the commission information from the Town of Kingston in regards to their cataloguing of the town's historic properties.

- **Signage Project**

There was discussion on the commission refocusing on the sign project, which could be for certain properties or event theme. Volunteers will be needed for this project.

- **Graveyard Project**

Member Bradshaw noted that the commission needs to place another ad to try to get residents more involved in the project.

Member Herlihy stated that a resident on West Road contacted him about the cutting of trees and brush near a graveyard that is on their property. He had requested that the resident write a letter to the commission, which he will follow up on for next meeting. He also spoke with the resident about becoming the designated person for the graveyard.

Member Tegeder commented that there are grave sites on the corner of Grove and Washington Roads, across from the Hungry Horse, that are in need of some attention. He has seen people walking on the stones and cutting trees over the site. He suggested that the commission may want to think about putting posts with chains around the site. The gravesite sits on town property.

Chair Giblin asked the members to visit the site, on their own, before the next meeting so it can be discussed.

Member Bradshaw spoke in regards to the possibility of adding the graveyard locations to the GIS (Geographical Information System), which is on the Town's website and is used as a search engine for properties in Town.

Member Herlihy suggested that they work on digitizing the old graveyards in Rye. The documents from the museum could be scanned into a digital database for people to view online.

- **Town Hall**

Chair Giblin stated that she is approached by people all the time who are asking about the Town Hall. She thinks there is more interest now in the building than there has ever been. She would hate to see that interest die down into nothing. She thinks the Heritage Commission is moving in the right direction but she hopes they can keep the interest alive.

Member Bradshaw commented that a letter should be sent to the editor once per week. She and Member Herlihy have written letters. She encourages other members to send letters

## **VI. Other Business**

- Member Herlihy stated that he had a discussion with the Seacoast Science Program Director in which they discussed six possible programs that could be put on at the center or library, co-sponsored by Rye Historical Society and Seacoast Science Center. The idea is to bring in a speaker who will give a presentation on six different themes from 2017 to 2022. This is six years leading up to the 2023 of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first European settlement in New Hampshire. The topics would include **geology**, (the history of the water and land), **native history**, **early explorers/first European settlers**, **farming/fishing history**, **how Rye becomes a resort community** and **the U.S. military and government becoming involved in Rye**.

He continued that the State negotiated a ten year contract with the Seacoast Science Center for mandated historic tours. There are two gentlemen who have been doing this on the Isles of Shoals who will be doing this at Odiorne. The tours will be 40 minute thematic tours with information being provided by the Historical Society.

## **VII. Next Meeting:**

- **June 1, 2017**

## **VIII. Announcements:**

- **Meeting with Selectmen regarding possible funding for Town Hall, May 22, 2017.**

## **Adjournment**

**Motion by Rich Davis to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger