

TOWN OF RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

February 2, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Rye Town Hall

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

Others Present: David Choate, NH Preservation Alliance Board Member and Rye Resident, and Peter Crawford, Rye Resident.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. Approval of Minutes

- January 5, 2017

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the minutes of January 5, 2017 as presented.
Seconded by Rich Davis. All in favor.**

III. Reports:

- Treasurer Report – Peter White

Member White submitted two reports to the commission for review. The first report was dated December 31, 2016. He noted that the report shows the commission has \$15,634 as its checking balance for the end of the year. The budget for 2016 was for \$4,300 and the commission spent \$2,800. This is a 35% savings in the budget. He continued the Selectmen lowered the budget for 2017 to \$3,800. This budget is consistent with the commission's goals for the year. He continued that the report for January 31st shows a balance of \$16,134 in the checking account. He noted that the last mailer raised about \$3,000 with expenses totaling \$1,200. The return on the mailer was a little less than what it has been in the past. He noted that the mailers seem to be bringing in less than what it had previously.

Member Bradshaw stated that there was a plan to hold a Regional Heritage Program in 2016, which was cancelled at the last minute. The 2016 budget included \$400 for the expenses of hosting the program. This would be a cost that the commission would carry forward. The major

change to the budget is in contracted services, which has decreased due to the reduced number of hours needed to transcribe the minutes of the meetings.

Member White pointed out that in the past the mailer was focused on raising funds for the Town Hall. This past mailer was spread out over four projects. Overall, the commission is in sound financial condition.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to accept the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Priscilla Jenness. All in favor.

IV. Project Updates:

- Preparation for Deliberative Session – Petitioned Town Hall Warrant Article

Member Bradshaw stated that she and Peter Crawford prepared a list of facts in regards to the Town Hall. This will be used as a handout at the Deliberative Session. The fact summary is now listed on the Heritage Commission's website, her Facebook and LinkedIn pages. She encouraged the members to email it to anyone who is a voter in Rye. She also encouraged members to call supporters of the Town Hall to show their support at the Deliberative Session. She continued that she will be presenting the commission's warrant article at the Deliberative Session.

There was discussion on an amendment in the warrant article language that is needed because the Budget Committee did not vote to recommend the article. This language will need to be amended at the Deliberative Session.

Member Bradshaw encouraged the members to speak in support of the article at the Deliberative Session. She suggested that Alex Herlihy or Peter White close the presentation on the article.

Member White agreed to speak after the article is deliberated. Member Herlihy will speak about the importance of saving a historic building.

David Choate, NH Preservation Alliance Board Member, stated that he will be speaking at the Deliberative Session in support of the article. He will speak to how communities, that are close to Rye, have used grants for the restoration of their town halls.

Member Bradshaw noted that she has received an application from the Preservation Alliance for a grant to help with costs related to promoting the warrant article for town vote, once it passes the Deliberative Session. She will submit the application to the alliance for a decision.

Mr. Choate stated that promoting the article needs to be run like a political campaign. Someone needs to coordinate the campaign or it will not be successful.

Member Herlihy noted that far fewer people vote in the town election than the presidential election. Running a campaign would be a real motivator to get people to come out to vote. There is usually only 1600 people who vote in the town election, which is about half of the amount of people who vote in the presidential election.

Member Bradshaw stated that she believes that people who were once supportive of the historic renovation have been frightened off by the exaggeration of the problems of the building. In preparing the fact sheet, she read all the reports and studies that have been done by architects and engineers over the last five years. The facts are actual quotes from the reports that were done for the town. She thinks they are in strong territory by saying the building is not that bad. Everyone on the commission is responsible and would not want to spend taxpayer money on a building that is going to fall down.

Vice-Chair Giblin stated that she understands that the problem all along is that the voters felt they did not have enough knowledge about the project. The educational piece is going to be key.

Selectman Jenness stated the problem about what to do with Town Hall has been studied to death. People are not involving themselves until it is time to go into the booth. Then they say "I don't know what I'm doing".

Member Herlihy commented that having public meetings is not a campaign.

Member Bradshaw pointed out it is an educational push that will hopefully reach every home. The commission members need to be available to get out as much information as possible. She continued that the impact of the warrant article on the tax rate is .22 per \$1,000. It would be about \$110 on a \$500,000 home for 2018. That includes the principal and interest payment on the bond. It reduces each year after that over the next ten years.

Member Davis noted that the point should be made that the town's past bonds have all been paid off at this time.

Selectman Jenness pointed out this is the most ideal time to make this kind of investment with the least amount of impact.

- Farragut Hotel Dig Update – James Tegeder

No new information.

V. Other Business:

Member Herlihy stated there has been some confusion in town in regards to the government versus private bodies. The Rye Heritage Commission was created as a town government body in 2011. Residents can request to be a member and the Selectmen appoint them to the commission.

The Historic District Commission was established in the 1960's. That is a separate government body. The Rye Historical Society is not part of the town government body. It is important to educate people on that distinction.

VI. Next Meeting:

- **Thursday, March 2nd, 6:30 p.m., Rye Town Hall**

VII. Announcements

- **February 4th, Rye Deliberative Session, 9:00 a.m., Rye Junior High**
- **February 18th, Rye Historical Society Tea, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

Adjournment

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger