

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, August 1, 2019

6:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Present: Phil Walsh, Mae Bradshaw, Peter White, Gail Hughes, Alternates Rich Davis and Selectmen's Rep Keriann Roman

I. Pledge of Allegiance

Acting-Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and led the pledge of Allegiance.

II. Member Introduction

The Members introduced themselves. Acting-Chair Walsh welcomed Selectman Roman back to the Commission.

III. Approval July Minutes – July 11, 2019

Motion by Peter White to approve the meeting minutes of July 11, 2019, as presented. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw. 5-Yes Selectman Roman Abstained.

IV. Demolition Committee – David Choate & Alex Herlihy

- *To be discussed at the September meeting.*

Member Bradshaw commented that the Demolition Committee is doing a great job under the direction of David Choate, setting up procedural guide lines to follow in order to gain more consistency.

V. Treasurer Report, Funding and Billing - Peter White

Treasurer Peter White reported as of July 31, 2019 the Commission has \$25,845.56. He pointed out that the Commission's budget has 55% remaining for the year which is right on track.

Member Bradshaw reported that there is a CIP requirement that any capital improvement project of \$15,000 or greater, within the next 6 years, must be reported to the CIP Committee to be placed in the CIP document. As of now, the Heritage Commission has not planned anything. She stated that at a recent Board of Selectmen's meeting, Patty Weathersby, member of the Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower, said that the State of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department wants to sell the tower. Ms. Weathersby asked if the Town would be interested in taking ownership. Ms. Weathersby will be attending the Heritage Commission meeting in September to discuss this further. Member Bradshaw added that one of the main issues in establishing the Heritage Commission was the ownership of the Pulpit Rock Tower. There will be a need for a maintenance fund to be set up for the tower. If the Heritage Commission takes on the ownership, it will be a major shift in the Heritage Commission's role. The Commission will become property managers and tour guides. Members Bradshaw stated that she is not totally against the idea, but it is something that the Commission needs to think about prior to the September meeting with Ms. Weathersby. There is a lot of important history and it is a part of the heritage of Rye.

Member White asked what will happen if no one steps up to take ownership.

Member Bradshaw explained that the tower would be sold by the State as abandoned property. Someone could buy it and tear it down.

Selectman Roman reported that the importance of the tower is that it is one of only a very few towers of its kind left in the country. It is also a part of Rye's history and heritage. She added that the State currently owns that property but for some reason they have to get rid of the property.

Member Bradshaw noted that she had asked why the State could not wait until the end of the lease to get rid of the property. The State reported that it takes four years for them to apply for an approval for abandonment of property from the federal government.

Selectman Roman stated that if this goes on the next town warrant it will start the four- year period.

Member White asked if there is any documentation on what maintenance and repairs have already been done to the tower.

Selectman Roman stated that Ms. Weathersby will be supplying that information. She added that in the original warrant article it stated that the town needed \$135,000 for repairs to the tower. This was based on estimates on what needed to be done back at that time, because the tower was in very bad shape. Since then, the Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower have done about 90% of that work. The \$135,000 would not be an every year expenditure. Selectman Roman stated that she understood that the \$20,000 to \$30,000 that the Friends would raise in a fund raiser for the maintenance would go into an endowment that is self-funded. So, unless there was a huge storm that tore half the tower down, the endowment would pay for the yearly maintenance. These are questions that the Commission will need to ask Ms. Weathersby and the woman from the NH Fish and Game Department. If that is the case, it would simply be a matter of whether the Heritage Commission can take on the duties of the management of it.

Member Bradshaw recommended scheduling a site walk prior to the September meeting.

Selectman Roman stated that she will have Janice schedule the site walk with the Board of Selectmen and the Heritage Commission.

Member Bradshaw suggested having a member of the Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower become an alternate on the Heritage Commission and take on the responsibility of the project.

Motion by Peter White to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Seconded by Gail Hughes. All in Favor.

VI. Town Hall Projects

Selectman Roman asked how the \$22,000 of the Commission's funds will be spent.

Treasurer White explained that it will be spent on the Town Hall project. To renovate and rejuvenate it in with the best way possible.

Member Bradshaw further explained that \$15,000 is part of the funds for the windows. The rest coming from an LCHIP grant. The rest of the funds is supposed to be seed-money. If the Commission goes out for a grant that needs matching funds, they will have that money available.

Treasurer White added that there is \$4,000 in unrestricted funds. After the \$15,000 is applied to the window project, there will be approximately \$7,000 in restricted funds for the Town Hall building.

Selectman Roman explained that the reason she had asked the question was that an RFP was sent out for proposals from architects to design the interior of the Town Hall building. The Selectmen voted on hiring Nancy Barba who worked on the Ground Roots report. The town received three proposals and her costs were in the middle. The lowest proposal came from a firm outside of the region. Ms. Barba has so much background already on the building. She also has specific experience dealing with buildings with historic value. The original RFP was dealing with space and ADA compliance issues. It came in at \$15,000. But now that the charrette has been completed, and there has been a lot of excitement about the results, there has been a new focus on the old trolley barn. The report that was done a few years ago on the trolley barn showed that it has mold issues but is structurally sound. The Selectman would like to have Ms. Barba come in to meet with them and have her come up with two proposals. The original proposal and a second one that would vacate the second floor to make that a meeting space and public gathering room similar to the Town of Wakefield. Selectman Roman stated that they do not know how much the second proposal will cost. They will be meeting with Ms. Barba on August 12th or the 26th and would like to come back to see if the Heritage Commission could help with the cost.

Member Bradshaw suggested that it will be important for any party that is involved with the fundraising be at the meeting with Ms. Barba.

Selectman Roman stated that she will get the date to the Commission as soon as possible.

VII. Grave Yard Projects

- *To be discussed at the September meeting.*

Member Bradshaw asked if James Tegeder has been contacted to see if his Cub Scout group would be interested in doing the project again this year.

Member White stated that he would call Mr. Tegeder.

VIII. Rye Day and Goss Farm Event

Acting-Chair Walsh announced that Goss Farm Day will be held on Sunday, September 22nd. Chair Giblin will have more information at the next meeting; however, she sent a quick update to the Commission. At this point, she has commitments from Apple Crest, Atlantic Grill, Ray's Seafood, the Abenauqui and possibly Petey's. There will be free admission and parking. Mailers and flyers about the event will be distributed with an announcement in the newspaper. Chair Giblin stressed the importance of everyone talking the event up to everyone that they know. The Commission really wants to have a huge turnout.

Member Bradshaw offered to do a Facebook blast.

Selectman Roman stated that the Rye Day meetings have been started up again. They are planning on having the event in June of next year. The issue is that there is a need for tons of volunteers and the committee is having trouble getting them. There are already big plans in the works. It will be like an Old Home Day where the community comes together and celebrates.

Member Hughes stated that she would talk to a friend of hers about providing his band for the event.

IX. CIP Report Mae Bradshaw

Member Bradshaw stated that the first meeting has been held for the first review. Some of the Departments have not responded with their submissions yet, so there will be an e-mail going out before next Monday night's meeting. The Heritage Commission does not have any item over \$15,000; however, this is subject to change pending what happens with the Pulpit Rock Tower.

X. Old Business

Member Davis asked what the status of the bank building was.

Selectman Roman explained that the Board of Selectmen are putting together a committee in order to put together a short-term and long-term plan to implement and expand on what Plan New Hampshire proposed. The bank building is a part of this plan. Dan Philbrick, owner of the TD Bank property, has been to the Plan New Hampshire and Selectmen's meetings. He is open to ideas and what the future plans may be. The committee will probably start in October. There is a need for volunteers to serve on the committee.

XI. New Business - None

XII. Next Meeting:

- **Thursday, September 5, 2019, Rye Town Hall**

XIII. Adjournment

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger