

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, November 7, 2019

6:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Present: Chair Bev Giblin, Clerk Mae Bradshaw, Treasurer Peter White, Phil Walsh, Alternate Rich Davis, Alternate Elizabeth Sanborn, Alternate Alex Herlihy

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Giblin called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and led the pledge of Allegiance.

I. Member Introduction

The Members introduced themselves. Chair Giblin seated Alternate Elizabeth Sanborn for Gail Hughes.

II. Demolition Committee update and voting

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to make Elizabeth Sanborn a regular, permanent member of the Commission. Seconded by Peter White. 5 in Favor; Member Sanborn Abstained. Motion Passed.

Member Bradshaw explained that there is a purposed ordinance amendment for demolition review.

There was a short discussion which clarified that the Demolition Committee is a subcommittee of the Heritage Commission. As such, the Demolition Committee does not have its own budget and any expenditures would be the responsibility of the Heritage Commission.

Member Bradshaw reviewed the amendment as follows:

Demolition review amends 509 Demolition Review as follows:

509.1 Purpose: The purpose of this section is to encourage the preservation of buildings and places of historic, architectural and community value.

509.2 Demolition: For the purpose of this section; the word “demolition” means the act of pulling down, destroying, dismantling, removing and razing a building or part of a building. This shall include a monument, statue, memorial or accessory building or commencing the same. Does not include interior demolition which does not alter the exterior of the building.

509.3 Demolition Subject to Review: Any demolition in the Town of Rye shall be subject to the requirements in this section where:

- A. The demolition is the building or part of the building is greater than 500 square feet of gross floor area; and*
- B. A monument, statue or memorial or is an accessory building of less than 500 square feet of historical or architectural interest. And*
- C. Building or part of a building, monument, statue, memorial or accessory building was constructed more than fifty years before the day of application for a demolition permit.*

509.4 Demolition Review Committee: A Demolition Review Committee will consist of three persons and three alternates.

509.5 Demolition Review Procedure:

B. The Demolition Review Committee shall meet within ten (10) business days of receiving the application to make one of the following two determinations:

C. Within five (5) days of the Demolition Review Committee's decision hold a Public Hearing.

Member Bradshaw stated that a public hearing must be posted. So, this last statement will need to be changed. It will have to be fourteen days (14) because it has to be posted/published for ten (10) days.

NEW

A demolition permit shall be conditioned upon receipt of all local, state and federal permits required for the Demolition Activity.

Member Sanborn clarified that as soon as the individual files with the Building Inspector, the Demolition Committee is notified; however, the demolition permit is the last permit to be issued. She explained that the reason for this is that during the process there could be many changes. An individual could potentially scape the building and then get out of the project and then the Town has lost a building.

This statement was questioned by the Commission.

Member Bradshaw read as follows:

E. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Demolition Review Committee shall either:

Not read:

1. Notify the Building Inspector in writing three (3) business days of the decision if the building is found to be not significant, in which case demolition may proceed, provided all other requirements applicable to the demolition have be met.

Read:

2. ***Hold a meeting between the Demolition Review Committee and the owner (or owner's representative) within (10) business days of the public hearing to discuss alternatives to demolition if the Demolition Review Committee determines the building is significant and its loss potentially detrimental to the community.***

F. The demolition review process shall not delay the issuance of a demolition permit by more than 49 days provided by Section 509.5, A,1, except in the following circumstances.

After further discussion Member Herlihy recommended that any questions or objections should be forward to David Choate, as he did the final wording.

Member Sanborn explained that it may need more clarification. She also stated that Member Choate had to have this reviewed by the Planning Board so there may have been further changes at that level.

Member Bradshaw read again:

A demolition permit shall be conditioned upon receipt of all local, state and federal permits required for the Demolition Activity.

She pointed out that this does not mean the building permit. The building permit would have to come after the demolition.

III. Vacancies on Commission

Chair Giblin reported that there are two alternate vacancies open on the Commission.

Member Bradshaw stated that she will be meeting with someone tomorrow afternoon that has been involved with the “Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower”. She is planning to see if they would be interested in joining the Commission as an alternate and taking on the leadership around the Tower.

Chair Giblin asked the Members to reach out to anyone that they think would be interested in joining the Commission.

Member Bradshaw suggested that it would be great to get someone to represent Rye Beach.

IV. Treasurer Report - Peter White

Treasurer Peter White reported that he asked for the financials from the Finance Office and has not received them. However, the financials are on track. There has not been a lot of expenditures or donations so the numbers are pretty consistent with the previous month. He added that the 2020 Heritage Budget was presented. It was the same as the previous year with the addition of \$750.00 for the Demolition Committee expenses. There was no discussion regarding Pulpit Rock Tower at this time.

V. Town Hall Projects

Member Bradshaw informed the Commission that the Board of Selectmen will be getting the architecture’s report. Ms. Barba will be presenting it at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting, Monday November 11th. She recommended that members from the Heritage Commission attend the meeting. She also informed the Commission that the Rye Town Center Committee will be attending that meeting, to discuss their thoughts on a warrant article for the town center.

Member Bradshaw explained that the Town Center Committee is dealing with the safety issues in the area between the Rye Junior High School and the Town Hall. Rockingham County Planning Commission attended one of the Town Center meetings to discuss the process and how they could help; however, a survey of the area will be needed and that will cost around \$10,000.

Member Bradshaw told the Commission that the Town has received \$22,000 from the State through the unrestricted municipal aid program. The Town Center Committee will be asking the Board of Selectmen to use that funding for the survey and an engineering plan. The warrant article will ask for matching funds for a Federal Transportation Alternative Program Grant, which is designed for streetscapes and sidewalk projects. The grant requires a twenty percent (20%) match.

Member Bradshaw also reported that the owner of the TD Bank building attended a meeting of the Historic District Commission. Mr. Philbrick is resurfacing the exterior and putting a new roof on the building. He will be using a gray slate material. The building will also have bleached shakes to give the building a weathered look. He will be replacing the plastic shutters with navy blue wooden shutters.

VI. Graveyard Project

Member Herlihy reported that the Historic Society had two long sessions in the oldest part of the Central Cemetery, which is in front of the cemetery garage. They will be doing another one in the spring. There are two parts of the tour. People will park in the upper parking lot at the church and walk down behind the church to the oldest part. This area has nothing to do with the cemetery. It was there long before the Central Cemetery. Member Herlihy stated that it will be a fantastic tour because it will be dealing with different kinds of stone and there is a lot of great history.

Member Herlihy suggested that this could be a project that could be co-sponsored by the Historic Society and the Heritage Commission.

The Commission agreed that it would be a great idea.

VII. Report on Rye Day and Goss Farm Event

Member Bradshaw stated that Rye magazine's cover story was about the Goss Farm Open House and Farmer's Market Event.

Member Herlihy stated that they want to have the Goss Farm Event again. There has also been discussion about having a Rye Day. He and Selectman Roman have talked informally and came up with the idea that maybe when a committee is formed, they could pick the last Saturday of September and make that Rye Day. There could be a parade and activities at Parsons Field and Goss Farm.

Chair Giblin reported that the Goss Farm Committee had their closing meeting and decided that the event is too expensive and cumbersome to have it as an annual event.

VIII. Louise Tallman Award

Member Bradshaw asked for the Commission's thoughts about who should receive the Louise Tallman Award this year. The award will be presented on December 5th at 5:00 pm at the Historic Museum.

The Commission unanimously agreed that the honor should go to Peter Crawford and that an article should be written up for a press release, the Civic News and Rye Magazine. Member Herlihy will do the article and notify Peter's family.

IX. Pulpit Rock Tower

Member Bradshaw stated that the Friends of Pulpit Rock want the Commission to take ownership of the Tower. However, the Commission does not want to take ownership until they know what it is going to cost to maintain every year.

Member White stated that the Commission could take ownership but should be a town project.

Member Herlihy stated that based on Ms. Weathersby's presentation in September, there is a group of people that are called The Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower. Just because that entity is going away, doesn't mean that all the people that volunteered are going away. The Heritage Commission should not ever feel that the Commissioners alone are the only ones that are going to have to care for any building that they take possession of. The Heritage Commission is charged to receive and/or raise money to get buildings and structures. However, the Commission is not charged to be the only volunteers to take care of them. He added that he does not see these people that have put in so much time and effort into the Tower just walking away.

Chair Giblin stated that it would be a good idea to get one of the members of that group to join the Heritage Commission.

Member Herlihy pointed out that the Public Works Department is responsible to help take care of all other town facilities. It would seem reasonable that they would be responsible to help out with this property once it becomes town owned.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that it is no different than the Conservation Commission. They own the easements and they have to make the trails and enforce the rules on the properties. The Heritage Commission would be the stewards of the Pulpit Rock Tower property.

Member Herlihy pointed out that it does not stop the Commission from working with the Board of Selectmen to establish an annual maintenance budget that the Town would vote for. The structure is in pretty sound shape. The Commission needs to hear from Mrs. Weathersby about what they think the yearly maintenance costs will be.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that the Friends of Pulpit Rock are sending out an RFP for an engineer to examine the building. They are choosing the engineer and paying for the engineer to tell us what has been done, what needs to be done and what it may need moving forward. Once that information is known, the Commission can go before the Selectmen and the Budget Committee to talk about it. Member White stated that he does not want the Commission to just be owning this property. He wants to see a collaboration with the town.

Member Bradshaw stated that will take buy-in from the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Chair Giblin stated that overall she is very much in favor of the ownership and all these issues could be worked out. The Commission can certainly do more work and can handle it. Her only concern is that she does not want it to become an albatross or something that the Commission can't handle.

The next move is to wait for the engineering report. Chair Giblin will follow-up on the status of the report with Mrs. Weathersby tomorrow morning.

Member Bradshaw recommended that they may have to establish a standing sub-committee of the Heritage Commission called the Pulpit Rock Tower sub-committee, in order to address the operations building maintenance and groundwork.

X. Old Business - None

XI. New Business - None

Member Herlihy announced that the 10th anniversary of the Rye Civic League will be celebrated at the annual meeting on Monday, November 18th at 7:00 PM at the Rye Public Library. They will also be hosting a county commissioner to speak starting at 7:30.

XII. Next Meeting: Thursday; December 5, 2019

XIII. Adjournment

Motion by Rich Davis to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. Seconded by Phil Walsh. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger