

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION
Thursday, January 9, 2020
6:30 p.m. – Rye Public Library Meeting Room

Present: Chair Bev Giblin, Clerk Mae Bradshaw, Alex Herlihy, Gail Hughes and Selectmen's Rep, Keriann Roman

Others Present: Patricia Weathersby of Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower

I. Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. Vacancies on Commission

Chair Giblin announced that Rich Davis has resigned from the Commission. She is planning to ask Alternate Sanborn to take his place as a regular member. There is a current need to get at least two more alternates to join the Commission.

Chair Giblin announced that she will have to be stepping down as chair. She pointed out she has been chair for the last three years and due to family commitments, she will be missing several meetings this year. She stated that she has approached Alex Herlihy, Phil Walsh and Peter White to ask if they are interested in taking the position. Phil Walsh was very interested. The commission members all agreed that Phil Walsh would be a good chair.

**Motion by Alex Herlihy to nominate Phil Walsh as chair of the Rye Heritage Commission.
Seconded by Gail Hughes. All in Favor.**

III. Demolition Review Committee Update

Member Bradshaw reported that the Demolition Review Committee has created a proposed new ordinance, led by David Choate. It has gone through the Rules and Regulations Committee and has passed the Planning Board as well, so it will go on the warrant.

IV. Treasurer Report - Peter White

Treasurer White was not in attendance.

V. Pulpit Rock Tower

Selectman Roman stated that there had been a question regarding where the Town is with Pulpit Rock Tower and how it got there. She explained that she wrote up a short background of the events. She further explained that in order to get this issue on the warrant for this year, it would have to be conditional.

Member Bradshaw expressed that she was not in favor of taking on this project until there is an RFP for an engineering study and that the study is done. She further expressed that it would be hugely

embarrassing to have to go back to the Budget Committee and ask for money in order to maintain the tower.

Chair Giblin stated that it was her understanding that the Heritage Commission would move forward on ownership of the Tower, based on the fact that they would be guaranteed the amount of money needed for upkeep and maintenance. Also, there needs to be someone that could take on that responsibility; a representative on the Heritage Commission. She further stated that for the most part, she felt that the commission members are in favor of moving forward, as long as those obstacles are met.

Member Bradshaw disagreed and stated that she would speak against this at the deliberative session, because they do not have enough information to put it forward in a warrant article of this magnitude.

Selectman Roman stressed that she is frustrated because it was the Heritage Commission's responsibility to follow through on the RFP; however, she understands that it was delayed due to a storm and other timing issues. As a result, it is not on the warrant. She also reminded the Commission the reason that the Heritage Commission was created in the first place was because of Pulpit Rock Tower. She stated that as a member of the Heritage Commission she feels that the Commission needs to be a little more open and to try to figure out how to move this forward.

Patricia Weathersby of Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower stated that she too is frustrated that the warrant article is not ready with all the needed information. That being said, she felt that she would be a lot more comfortable waiting until next year. She added that she does not want to go to the voters and say take this on for an amount and then have to undo it and ask again. If the engineering report comes back as \$75,000 or \$100,000., the Friends of Pulpit Rock can't commit to that and neither could the Heritage Commission. She suggested that it is more important to know that everyone wants to move forward and that it is feasible, before presenting this to the voters.

Chair Giblin reiterated that the majority of the Members of the Heritage Commission are in favor of taking ownership; however, they just need to be sure that they have the resources for sustainability.

Ms. Weathersby stated that the next step would be the RFP. (She submitted a draft of an RFP to the Commission for their input.) She pointed out a couple of points for discussion.

- There are two questions to be answered by the engineering study.
 - a. The structural integrity of the building
 - b. The cost of the ongoing maintenance of the structure

Ms. Weathersby pointed out that at the site walk there was a question regarding getting electricity to the tower and how much would that cost. As a reminded, Ms. Weathersby stated that the Friends of Pulpit Rock would not pay for that expense. She asked if this was the time to get that information.

Member Bradshaw stated that was understood; however, that information may impact the warrant article's success.

Selectman Roman stated that it makes sense to do it, but it needs to be separated out from the base costs.

There was discussion regarding the timeframe that will be set in the RFP for the annual maintenance and periodical long-term foreseeable repairs or identifiable capital expenditures.

It was agreed that twenty years (20) was an acceptable number.

Looking at the draft RFP Selectman Roman made the following amendment:

What work is required now, as well as annual maintenance costs plus twenty years of capital expenditures/improvements, (identified and costs) to ensure that the Tower will remain structurally sound.

There was more discussion and review of the RFP draft. The deadline for the RFP responses will be April 15, 2020. The Heritage Commission will make a decision at the May 7, 2020 meeting.

Selectman Roman will make the revisions as discussed and present the RFP to the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting.

VI. Town Hall Projects – No update at this time.

Selectman Roman reported that the Board of Selectmen have asked Ms. Barba to evaluate the TD Bank building, in regards to space and how to configure it. They also asked her to do the same exercise at the Parsonage.

VII. Graveyard Projects

Member Herlihy reported that the Historic Society will be hosting a tour of the Central Cemetery, which had been scheduled for this past fall, this upcoming spring. It had been canceled due to bad weather.

Chair Giblin asked for clarification between the word's cemetery and graveyards.

Member Herlihy explained that the difference is that Central Cemetery was laid out in 1893 as a public town cemetery. It is totally different from the 60 plus privately owned family graveyards on farmsteads.

VIII. Old Business

Chair Giblin reported that the Heritage Commission did not have their annual Christmas Party in December because of the bad weather. It got canceled twice.

Member Bradshaw reported she received a request that each commission and committee have their own by-laws. She pointed out that Heritage was all set because they had passed their by-laws on December 1, 2011. She gave a copy of the by-laws to Selectman Roman. Selectman Roman also asked that an electronic copy be sent to the Executive Office.

Chair Giblin stated that the Heritage annual report is due for the Town Annual Report. She said that she would be happy to submit it prior to her stepping down as chair.

Member Bradshaw reported that Member Walsh received a letter from LCHIP, inviting the members to meet with them in January, regarding the Commission's LCHIP application that did not succeed to discuss how they might be improved.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that this grant was for the Town Hall windows. She noted that the Friends of Town Hall have stated that they are still committed to getting the project done. She suggested that a starting point may be to do all the storm windows. Then in the spring, if they can find more money, they can take out two to three windows at a time. They may be able to do a fundraiser, like buy a pane for \$100 or some other type of event.

Member Bradshaw reported that she is a member of the Rye Town Center Committee. The focus has been on safety in the center of town, to include but not limited to, traffic calming by narrowing the street, and adding sidewalks and bike lanes. They are working on an application for a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant in the amount of \$800,000. The match for the Town will be \$300,000 and the State/Federal will be \$500,000. It is a very competitive process. Rye is looked at as a community that has more resources than most towns, so it will remain to be seen if it is approved.

Member Bradshaw added that in addition to looking at the Town Center, the Committee felt that they would be looking at the usage of the town-owned buildings; the Trolley Barn, Town Hall and Parsonage. Then, the opportunity came up for the exchange of the Parsonage with the TD Bank building. Also, the Trolley Barn would be sold in order to get the funding for the necessary renovations to the Town Hall and the TD Bank building. These were all issues that the Town Center Committee Members thought that they were going to be working on over the next few years. Now they feel that their charge has been taken away, leaving them without much to do.

Selectman Roman stated that is the feeling but it is not the truth. She reported that the Board of Selectmen had several meetings with the Library Trustees, regarding the Library expansion and the Town Hall renovations and how they could work together to present the residents with a long-term plan. As part of that discussion, the Town Center Committee was mentioned and what their charge would be and how they would be involved. Selectman Roman stressed that she had a very detailed discussion at one of those meetings with Mr. Azzi about how the Selectmen were moving forward with the architectural study with Nancy Barba on the Town Hall and how they would be working in conjunction with the Town Center Committee. A warrant article was passed last year, which ordered the Selectmen to come up with a plan for the Town Hall and that is what they are trying to do. The opportunity that has been presented to the Town by Mr. Philbrick, is a one-time deal that will save the Town \$500,000 or more. The position as Selectmen is not "We're the Selectmen and we're going to tell the Town to do this." That is not the Selectmen's role. The position as Selectmen is that if there is an opportunity that will solve the space problems and save \$500,000, we have to advance that opportunity to the voters. If that means that it takes away, in terms of how the sidewalks, access and use of buildings works with the town center, then that is the way it has to be. The Selectmen cannot take the choice away from the voters.

Member Bradshaw read a small piece that has been put together to help with public education on the work of the Rye Town Center Committee and the warrant article.

IX. Next Meeting: Thursday, February 6, 2020

X. Adjournment

Motion by Alex Herlihy to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Keriann Roman . All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger