

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, May 7, 2020

3:00 p.m. – via ZOOM

Members Present: Chair Phil Walsh, Vice-Chair Gail Hughes, Treasurer Peter White, Alex Herlihy, Elizabeth Sanborn, David Choate, Frank Lagana and Mae Bradshaw (joined at 3:15)

I. Call to Order

Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Statement by Chair Phil Walsh:

As chair of the Heritage Commission, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video and other electronic means. We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Heritage Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number 646-558-8656 and password 915376 or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.com ID #889-7047-0098. Password: 915376

We previously gave notice to the public for the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the board at: town.rye.nh.us

If anybody has a problem, please email the Executive Assistant at kdrago@town.rye.nh.us

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Roll call attendance of members:

- Phil Walsh
 - Gail Hughes
 - Peter White
 - Alex Herlihy
 - Elizabeth Sanborn
 - David Choate
 - Frank Lagana
- (All members confirmed they were the only ones present in the room.)*

II. Review of Minutes of April 10, 2020

Motion by Alex Herlihy to approve the minutes of April 10, 2020 as presented. Seconded by Gail Hughes.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Yes; Gail Hughes – Yes; Elizabeth Sanborn – Yes; Peter White – Yes; Frank Lagana – Yes; David Choate – Yes

Motion passed.

III. Treasurer's Report – Peter White

Member White reported there have been no disbursements and no increases in revenues so the Commission is static with previous numbers.

IV. Election of Officers

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to move the election of officers as follows;

- **Chair – Phil Walsh**
- **Vice-Chair – Gail Hughes**
- **Clerk – Mae Bradshaw**
- **Treasurer – Peter White**

Seconded by David Choate

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Yes; Alex Herlihy – Yes; Gail Hughes – Yes; Peter White – Yes; Elizabeth Sanborn – Yes; Frank Lagana – Yes; David Choate - Yes

V. Old Business:

a. Pulpit Rock Tower Update

Chair Walsh reported that he heard back from Patricia Weathersby. The Friends of Pulpit Rock Tower held a meeting yesterday morning. Right now, their plan is to try and get more information from the firm that provided the higher than expected quote. Ms. Weathersby is hoping that by working with the Town, getting more information and perhaps having a site walk, that they may be able to get the quote adjusted. At this time, the Heritage Commission is in a holding place, until the Friends of Pulpit Rock make an equitable agreement with the firm. Ms. Weathersby agreed to keep the Heritage Commission updated. Chair Walsh noted that Memorial Day Tours for Pulpit Rock Tower are being postponed this year because of the virus. They are hoping to be able to hold something in the fall. Ms. Weathersby encourages the Heritage Commission to stay involved with the process, so it can be taken to the next step once they are able to move forward.

b. Rye Day Follow-up

Chair Walsh noted that he participated in a conference call regarding Rye Day. He believes that Member Herlihy participated in that call, as well. He asked Member Herlihy if he has any new information.

Member Herlihy commented that the date is still set for September 27th; however, everything is still an unknown at this time.

VI. New Business:

- **Discussion of the Letter of Intent for LCHIP Grant**

Note: *Mae Bradshaw joined the meeting at 3:15 p.m.*

Chair Walsh stated that he was hoping to hear the commission members' thoughts on whether or not this is the appropriate time to go through this process. He asked if they would be better off waiting and going through some of the boxes that have not been checked; such as, the storm windows. He did not want to make a decision without everyone weighing-in and discussing the merits of the grant.

Member Choate asked if the grant would be for continued improvements of Town Hall.

Chair Walsh explained that last year the Commission applied for a grant and part of it was to rehab the windows, which would be one of the main cruxes if this was to happen again.

Member Bradshaw explained that originally the Commission was talking about restoring the upstairs windows in the Town Hall. The Commission received a couple of bids and different approaches. Steve Decatur was the person who seemed to have the most knowledge about what to do with the windows. He recommended scraping around the windows and replacing the glass in the ones that needed replacing. It was his opinion that a good storm window was needed for the outside of the building upstairs. Mr. Decatur would take out three windows at a time and take them to his studio for rebuilding. During that time, the building would be secure because the new storm windows would be in place.

Member Choate asked if the windows are ever opened.

Member Bradshaw noted there is air conditioning in the building and the big windows are never opened.

Member Choate suggested interior storms, as they may be a lot less expensive.

Member Bradshaw pointed out the interior storms would not protect the wooden windows. The intent of the outside storm windows is to protect the monumental windows once they are restored. She noted that Steve Decatur was going to charge approximately \$25,000 to restore approximately sixteen windows. She also noted that when the Commission applied for the LCHIP Grant last year, Mr. Decatur confirmed he would still do it for the same price. She assumes he would do it for the same price this year also. She believes LCHIP is a half match grant. The Heritage Commission was going to come up with a quarter, Friends of Town Hall were going to come up with a quarter and LCHIP was being sought to cover the difference. She continued that the Commission was also going to seek from LCHIP the cost of the storm windows that were recommended as historically appropriate for the outside.

Vice-Chair Hughes noted there is a total of ten original windows that need to be repaired.

Member Bradshaw continued that the whole window project did not include replacing the first-floor windows, but it was put into the LCHIP Grant. The goal was to replace all the windows with an appropriate historical look to the rest of the building. The first-floor windows are failing, in the sense they are not providing enough insulation and new storms are needed. She explained that when the first grant application was done last year, the lower windows were included. The grant application was rejected. It was explained that it was rejected because the first-floor windows were included, which are not historical.

Vice-Chair Hughes stated that LCHIP made it clear that the reason the application was rejected is because the Town's need is not as great as other communities in the State of New Hampshire. Rye is a very well-to-do community. From that, it was very easy to conclude that they felt the Town had other resources. She continued that considering all that went into assembling that proposal, the confusion that followed and the discussion with the folks at LCHIP, it would be a total waste of the Heritage Commission's time and energy to submit another application requesting a grant.

Member Herlihy stated if the second-floor windows are focused on, with fifty percent support from the community through Heritage and Friends, it is a very different application than from the one that was rejected.

Member Bradshaw agreed.

Chair Walsh commented that LCHIP's take was to reduce the scale and focus on the second-floor aspect, which may give it a better shot. Given the storm windows have not been addressed, part of him wonders if they would be better served checking that box off this year. A year from now, the Heritage Commission can go to LCHIP and say they are focusing on the just the second-floor historic windows. They can also let LCHIP know that steps have been taken to address the storm windows overall and meet the Town's needs. One of the concerns that LCHIP aired during conversations was that all of the support from the Town was great but they wanted to be shown the results. Chair Walsh commented that he wonders if the Heritage Commission would be better served if they took that approach. It may go a long way in helping this case if they can say the storm windows are done and they have taken some steps forward. He asked the thoughts of the other members.

Member Sanborn stated that any time the "foot is taken off the gas" on a town hall project, it leaves the Commission open to greater scrutiny and discord. She would rather make the scope smaller and stay with the project, while at the same time managing the storm window situation. The Commission has to keep going. There are a lot of towns that are going to miss a year for different reasons. Rye should not be one of them. Maybe Rye's chances will be improved during this unfortunate situation with the virus. She feels like there is always a group ready to pounce if the Commission takes a misstep. She thinks there is equally as much of a case to reissue the grant request, but in a smaller scope.

Member Herlihy agreed.

Member Bradshaw stated there is a good argument this year that the Commission didn't have before. The Town's budget and warrant articles have to focus on ADA compliance. The money that the citizenry is coming up with is to make the building ADA compliant and open up the second floor again. This is within the Commission's historic purview but is a step the Town has to do, which is not being asked of LCHIP. It shows where the Town's money is going in making the building ADA compliant and opening up the second floor.

Member White stated that he agrees with Member Sanborn. If worse comes to worse, the second-floor can be taken care of in the next round and the storm windows can be taken care of in the ensuing year. He pointed out the Commission has the resources to individually fund the storm windows if the worst case was they were the last guy standing.

Member Bradshaw pointed out the price of the restoration was reliant upon the fact that the storms would be provided so the windows could be removed three at a time. If there are no storms in place, the windows would have to be boarded. It was felt that the windows should not be boarded for a year in order for the work to be completed. She believes the Friends of Town Hall will willing to go in on the storm windows this year, while the Commission applied once again for the rehab of the monumental windows.

Member Sanborn suggested that the Commission take a vote on whether the proposal should be readjusted for a chance at this year's funding.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to seek the Friends of Town Hall participation, and the Select Board's approval, of buying with Heritage Funds and Friends Funds the storm windows and having them installed forthwith.

Vice-Chair Hughes stated this was already settled previously when Burt Dibble came before the Heritage Commission on behalf of the Friends. The total cost of the storm windows is \$11,132.22. It should be broken down in the minutes of that meeting what the ratios were going to be. She does not believe it was 50/50. She continued this had gone to the Selectmen via Keriann Roman. The quote was presented in February.

Member White stated that he recalls the Friends were going to put in \$5,000 and Heritage was going to round up to \$6,000 and change.

Member Bradshaw stated that it seems they will need to get the select board's approval to do this.

Member Sanborn stated if Keriann Roman was going to bring it to the Selectmen after the February meeting, she should have an answer.

Chair Walsh confirmed the amounts of \$6,132.22 from Heritage and \$5,000 from 'Friends'. He continued that the way it was left is that Keriann was going to wait for the engineer's report that was supposed to be due in April. Speaking to Kate Drago, Selectmen's Secretary, he asked if the Selectmen have received the report back at this point.

(Kate Drago spoke to Chair Walsh but was inaudible. It seemed that she was letting him know that she will check and get back to him.)

Member Bradshaw pointed out the letter of intent to LCHIP is due May 15th. It just has to be a letter stating that they will be reapplying for a grant for the monumental windows and will not be including the second-floor windows or storm windows. She would like to check with Keriann Roman to be sure this is okay for the Commission to do before the letter is sent. The Selectmen ultimately have to sign the application for the grant.

Chair Walsh pointed out the Selectmen do not need to sign the letter of intent.

Member Sanborn suggested moving forward on sending the letter of intent because it is just the Commission's intentions and an application does not have to be filed if the select board will not support it.

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to send a letter of intent by May 15th to LCHIP for a grant that covers \$28,000 for the restoration of the historic windows on the second-floor of the Town Hall, which does not include storm windows or first-floor windows. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw.

Roll Call: Gail Hughes – No; Peter White – Yes; Alex Herlihy – Yes; Elizabeth Sanborn – Yes; Mae Bradshaw – Yes; David Choate – Yes; Frank Lagana – Yes; Phil Walsh – No

Motion passed.

Chair Walsh confirmed he will draft the letter of intent in the next few days and email it to the members for feedback. The letter needs to be submitted to LCHIP by May 15th.

VII. Further Discussion

Member Choate noted that he participated in the recent zoning board meeting to speak on an application that was before the Demolition Review Committee at 2257 Ocean Blvd. The proposal is to tear down the existing cape and build a new home. He commented that the zoning board has a reputation of granting any variance that comes before them. His concern was not so much about the house at 2257 Ocean Blvd; however, it could have been an 1850's house with an owner who cares less about history. By the zoning board granting all these variances, there is going to come a day when they are going to be facilitating the demolition of a property the Heritage Commission does not want demolished. He asked that anyone who hears of a case that involves demolition to let him know, so the Commission has a chance to weigh-in on those applications.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to adjourn at 3:55 p.m. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw.

Roll Call: Gail Hughes – Yes; Mae Bradshaw – Yes; Peter White – Yes; Elizabeth Sanborn – Yes; Frank Lagana – Yes; David Choate – Yes; Phil Walsh – Yes

Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger