

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, September 3, 2020

3:30 p.m. – Via ZOOM

Members Present: Chair Philip Walsh, Peter White, Alex Herlihy and Alternates Frank Lagana, and Anne Richter-Arnold. Selectmen's Rep: Bill Epperson; Elizabeth Sanborn joined the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

I. READING of ATTESTATION

Statement by Phil Walsh:

As a Chair of the Rye 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. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

- a) 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 Historic District 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: 015764 or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.com ID #822-4729-0034.
- b) Public notice has been provided 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 Town of Rye website town.rye.nh.us
- c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access.
If anyone has a problem, call 603-964-5523 or e-mail at kdrago@town.rye.nh.us.
- d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.
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 Commission:

- Peter White
- Anne Richter-Arnold
- Alex Herlihy
- Frank Lagana
- Bill Epperson
- Philip Walsh

Note: The Members stated where they were located and confirmed that they were the only ones in the room for the meeting.

Chair Walsh seated Alternate Anne Richter-Arnold for Member Gail Hughes.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES from July 2020 Meeting

Selectman Epperson stated that he has read the minutes from the July 2020 meeting and asked to make a couple of comments. He pointed out that during the discussion about the Parsonage/TD Bank exchange, there was not one comment on why the deal was important to the Town. He added that the deal is officially dead at this point in time. He stressed that the Town Hall is extremely cramped and there are people working in closets. The swap with the TD Bank would have provided 2,400 square feet of space and would have alleviated that significantly. Additionally, there is three acres of land at the back of the bank that the Town would have had access to, to use at some future date. He stressed that the Town has been ten years trying to figure out a way to expand, in a way that would be beneficial for the entire Town, and have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars doing it. He commented that this was a real disappointment to him personally and to a lot of other people in town. The Town Hall, as it stands, is not ADA compliant and there will be no refurbishing of the second floor of the Town Hall and all of the other things that is felt to be very important. He summed up by stating he felt that it was one of the biggest mistakes that the Town has made in the last fifteen years.

Member Herlihy stated that he has been on the Heritage Commission since its conception in 2011. He has always been incredibly supportive of doing something to improve town hall and very supportive of the exchange, regardless of what anyone said about it. The deal was rushed. That was just the nature of it. However, the Heritage Commission has consumed “god knows how much time” in earlier Heritage meetings in support of this process. He added that it is a huge disappointment to him as well.

Chair Walsh agreed that this is disappointing. He added that he knows it won’t be this idea, but hopefully something else can be brought together down the line.

Motion by Alex Herlihy to accept the meeting minutes of July 2, 2020 as written. Seconded by Peter White.

Roll Call Vote: Peter White – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Philip Walsh – Aye; Selectmen Epperson – Abstained

Motion passed.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT: July/August

Treasurer Peter White reported that he has the numbers for July 31st, but the finance office did not have time to get the numbers for August. The Rye Heritage Commission's bank balance is \$26,571 as of July 31st; of which, \$7,511 is unrestricted. The remaining \$19,060 is restricted for town hall improvements. All of the money has come in from fundraisers. Heritage has a budget of \$4,850 for 2020. The Commission has spent \$856 leaving \$3,933 or 82%. Treasurer White reported that Janice recommended that the Commission revise their motion of the June meeting for the purchase of hats to replenish the inventory. She recommended that the motion contain specific data and not just round numbers.

Motion by Peter White to order 500 hats from Forbes Marketing Group, LLC in the amount of \$3,923 with the money coming from the Heritage unrestricted account. Seconded by Philip Walsh.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Yes; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Bill Epperson – Aye. Motion passed.

IV. DEMOLITION REVIEW COMMITTEE: Subcommittee Proposal

Chair Walsh reported that David Choate was unable to attend today's meeting. However, Member Choate has brought up an idea of a subcommittee he would like to form that would consist of members from both the Heritage and the Historic District Commission. It would focus at looking at historic structures to protect, both in and out of the Historic District and to give the Demolition Committee a little more "teeth".

Member Herlihy explained that the Historic Properties Committee would be made up of two representatives from the Demolition Review Committee, Rye Heritage Commission, Rye Historic District Commission, and the Rye Historical Society. Their task will be to identify, catalog, and inform the community on why these homes will always be worth saving. Member Herlihy also reported that there is a new volunteer, Lydia Tilsley, who is helping on the Old House Documentation Project. He added that she has practically took over the whole project and has been extremely helpful. Ms. Tilsley has just become an alternate on the Historic District Commission.

Chair Walsh stated that Member Choate is looking for two members from the Heritage Commission for the subcommittee. If there is anyone that is interested in joining, just send Chair Walsh an e-mail or send one to Member Choate as well.

Member Herlihy noted that by forming this committee, they will be able to decide the best way to do public education on historical houses. They will be able to work with the property owners and realtors in this important matter.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Opening for Alternate(s) on RHC; Demolition Review Committee**
 - **Elizabeth Lantz (RHC Alternate)**
 - **Jay Longtin (Demolition Review Committee Alternate)**
 - **Anne Arnold (RHC Member)**

Chair Walsh stated that Elizabeth Lantz sent a letter of interest, which he has distributed to the members. She is very enthusiastic about joining the Commission. She has a legal background that could be a benefit and a source of experience to bring to the Commission. Mae Bradshaw spoke very highly of Ms. Lantz.

Motion by Peter White to appoint Elizabeth Lantz as an alternate on the Rye Heritage Commission. Seconded by Anne Richter-Arnold.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Yes; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Bill Epperson – Aye.

Motion passed.

Chair Walsh stated that Elizabeth Sanborn has recommended Jay Longtin as an alternate to the Demolition Review Committee. He asked Mr. Longtin to introduce himself.

Mr. Longtin stated that he lives at 361 Central Road. He and his wife have been fixing up their home for the last several years and has gone through the demolition process. He has been an architect for over twenty years. He believes that he will bring a unique prospective to the committee and he is very interested in joining.

Member Sanborn joined the meeting at this time and stated that she highly recommends Mr. Longtin. Not only because he is an architect, but because he has a love for older homes. When he came before the Demolition Review Committee, they were a little dysfunctional at that time. He wanted to take down a section of his home. The Committee didn't even have the power of persuasion because they were wrong. He has done an extraordinary job with his home. He brings a compassion for older properties and an education to the other members on the Committee, where taking down a section of a home really enhances it.

Motion by Phil Walsh to appoint Jay Longtin as an alternate on the Demolition Review Committee. Seconded by Alex Herlihy.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Yes; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn; Bill Epperson – Aye.

Motion passed.

Chair Walsh thanked Mr. Longtin for his interest and being willing to serve.

Chair Walsh stated Mae Bradshaw has resigned her position on the Heritage Commission because she has been appointed to the select board to fill the remaining term of Keriann Roman. He added that they will certainly miss Mae on the Heritage Commission, as she been an integral part for a very long time and she has been a real asset. He wished her well and thanked her for all her years

of service to the Heritage Commission. With Mae stepping down, this leaves a vacancy for a regular member. Anne Arnold has expressed interest in stepping up to this position. He stated that he feels that Anne will be a good person to fill Mae's shoes. Anne will be an asset as she has been a strong alternate member with the Commission for many years; as well as, her work with the Rye Magazine.

Ms. Arnold told the Commission she has also worked on projects with the Historical Society for several years. Each month she writes an article called the Town Hall Tales for Rye Magazine.

Motion by Phil Walsh to appoint Anne Arnold as a full member on the Heritage Commission. Seconded by Peter White.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Yes; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn; Bill Epperson – Aye.

Motion passed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- **Pulpit Rock Tower Next Steps**

Chair Walsh updated the Commission on the status of Pulpit Rock Tower. He talked to Patty Weathersby and the engineering firm has finished their inspection and are working with an electrician to see how much it would cost to install electrical service to the structure. Ms. Weathersby is waiting to hear back from Eversource. She is hoping to have the finished report within the month. Chair Walsh stated that if that is the case, the Commission would still have time to write a warrant article to go before the Town in March.

- **Meeting Date Change**

Member Choate can not be at the October meeting on the first Thursday and asked that the meeting be scheduled on the second Thursday. It was agreed that the meeting will be October the 8th at 3:30 p.m.

Chair Walsh welcomed Selectman Epperson to the Commission. He asked Selectman Epperson to update the Commission on the status of the cell tower.

There was a short discussion regarding the Commission concerns about camouflaging the tower.

Selectman Epperson stated that he was pretty sure that issue has already been addressed, but he would check on it. He continued that in 1996, the Cell Tower Reform Act was approved by congress and went into law. The carriers have very wide latitude of how and where they can put a tower. Verizon came to Rye and said there is a gap in their coverage along the eastern part of the area and their intention was to put a cell tower on 120 Brackett Road. 120 Brackett Road is a single residential area. It is bound by wetlands and this tower, of about 127-foot-tall, was going to be about 25 feet off Brackett Road with houses within 127 feet of it. If it were to fall it would hit a house. If the Town did not find a space that would satisfy the gap coverage, it would have been

forced by the courts to put the tower in that spot. This would have been a disaster, both environmentally and economically.

Selectman Epperson noted that the proceeds from the rent on the tower on Grove Road paid for the new ambulance. The Town will receive revenue from this new tower as well, because it will be built on town property on Port Way. The Tower is 127 feet tall, but by the way it sits, it will not be as intrusive as it would have been on Brackett Road. There is a summary that Attorney Donovan sent to the select board through Kim Reed dated August 5th, which outlines were the process stands at this time. Selectman Epperson promised to scan it and send it over to Chair Walsh for distribution to the commission members.

He added that the permit is moving forward. One of the conditions of the Planning Board approval is that Verizon obtain approval from the NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act). Part of the NEPA approval process is to get clearance from the NH Division of Historic Resources (DHR). This should be approved soon. After that approval is received, they will begin their geotechnical work. They expect to be in a position of applying for a building permit towards the end of the year with construction in the spring of 2021. Right now, the Brackett Road application is still on the books and will not be withdrawn until they get the building permit for Port Way.

Selectman Epperson stated that this is probably not the last time the Town will hear from Verizon. He stressed the need for the Town to stay pro-active regarding the issue because the FCC has given the telecommunication companies sufficient power over local zoning. He commended the residents on Port Way for their part in making this project come about, as they were extremely instrumental in the process.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Alex Herlihy to adjourn at 4:47 p.m. Seconded by Elizabeth Sanborn.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Yes; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn;

Bill Epperson – Aye.

Motion passed

Respectfully Submitted
Dyana F. Ledger