

**RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING**

**Thursday, March 11, 2021
3:30 p.m. – via ZOOM**

Members Present: Chair Phil Walsh, Vice-Chair Gail Hughes, Treasurer Peter White, Anne Richter-Arnold and Alternates Elizabeth Sanborn, David Choate and Frank Lagana
Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson (joined meeting at 3:40 p.m.)

I. Call to Order

Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom teleconferencing.

Statement by 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 board 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 by dialing in to the following phone number: 646-558-8656 or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.com ID #899 1043 5887 Password: 852147

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 website of the Conservation Commission at: town.rye.nh.us go to the Conservation Commission page and click on the agenda for this meeting. If anyone has a problem, please call 603-379-0801 or email: Janice Ireland at jireland2@ryenh.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:

1. Phil Walsh
2. Anne Richter-Arnold
3. Gail Hughes
4. Peter White
5. Elizabeth Sanborn
6. David Choate
7. Frank Lagana

(Each board member confirmed that there were no others present with them in the room.)

Note: *Alternate Elizabeth Sanborn was seated for Member Bev Giblin.*

II. Approval of Minutes

- February 11, 2021

Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes of February 11, 2021.

Seconded by Gail Hughes.

**Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Gail Hughes – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye;
Peter White – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Frank Lagana - Aye**

Note: *Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson joined the meeting.*

III. Business/Updates

- **Treasurer's Report** – February & March 2021

Treasurer Peter White reported that the Heritage Commission has \$21,658 in its account; of which, \$15,639 is restricted for Town Hall use and \$6,018 is unrestricted. He continued that the 2021 Budget has not yet been approved because of the lack of the town vote and deliberative session. The Commission is accruing expenses against an unapproved budget; however, the expenses are modest. Year-to-date, the Commission has spent \$195 and the proposed budget is \$4,000.

Referring to the restricted funds, Alternate Sanborn asked if there is \$3,500 restricted for the gazebo.

Treasurer White explained that is being allocated out of unrestricted funds. The Commission has already spent money to transport the gazebo. There are now some restricted expenses allocated from the unrestricted balance for improvements.

Alternate Sanborn pointed out it was \$2,000 for upkeep.

Treasurer White and Chair Walsh agreed that was their recollection, as well.

Alternate Sanborn asked if this money should be coming from restricted funds.

Treasurer White explained the restricted funds are only for Town Hall. The \$2,000 for the gazebo is allocated out of the unrestricted balance.

**Motion by Gail Hughes to approve the Treasurer's Report for February and March.
Seconded by Frank Lagana.**

**Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Gail Hughes – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye;
Peter White – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Frank Lagana - Aye
Bill Epperson – Aye
Motion passed.**

- **Demolition Review Committee Update – DRC Chair David Choate**

Alternate David Choate noted that an application was received to demolish a barn at 1053 Washington Road. A site walk has been scheduled for Monday, March 15th at 3:00 p.m., which is a public meeting. According to the tax card, the house and barn were built in 1850. Steve Bedard drove by the property and followed up saying; ***"It looks like a good barn to me. Has some window changes to second floor facing road. Looking from the roadside, no reason to believe that it might not be the same age as the twin chimney federal house with the attached carriage shed."***

Alternate Choate noted there is a meeting with the demolition contractor to find out why they want to tear the barn down. This is the only application the Committee has pending. The Committee will determine if this barn is worth saving; if so, they will try to figure out a way to do so.

- **Historic Structure Taskforce Update**

Alternate Choate stated that the Historic Structure Taskforce has officially been renamed The Rye Advocates. There was a meeting this past Monday. There are a lot of things in the works; such as, letters and surveys to go out to all pre-1900 homeowners. They are working on getting an article in Rye Reflections and the Herald, in order to get some pre-publicity so people know what the committee is doing. He commented they are just looking for ways to keep people engaged with their houses and help them to appreciate its history.

Members of the Rye Advocates include: David Choate, Elizabeth Sanborn, Frank Lagana and Peter White.

IV. New Business:

- **Reappointment for Members of Heritage Commission**
(Phil Walsh, Bev Giblin)
- **Demolition Review Committee**
(Elizabeth Sanborn)

Motion by Peter White to recommend the reappointment of Phil Walsh and Beverly Giblin to the Heritage Commission for three years and Elizabeth Sanborn to the Demolition Review Committee. Seconded by Anne Richter-Arnold.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Gail Hughes – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Frank Lagana - Aye Bill Epperson – Aye

Motion passed

Letters of intent and recommendation will be sent to the Select Board for the members reappointments.

- **Resignation of Elizabeth Lantz, Alternate**

Chair Walsh noted that Elizabeth Lantz has resigned as an alternate to the Heritage Commission. She is in the process of starting a new job and felt she did not have the time to commit to the Commission going forward. If her schedule lightens up, she hopes to be able to rejoin the group in the future. Chair Walsh pointed out this leaves an opening for an alternate, if anyone knows of someone who might be interested.

- **National Register of Historic Places Plaque for Town Hall:** Gail Hughes

It was noted that the quote for the plaque was sent to the Commission Members by email.

Vice-Chair Gail Hughes stated that it looks like the 11x8 is going to work out well for the plaque. Erie Landmark is a very reputable company and they are most familiar with making these plaques for places all over the country.

Treasurer White asked if the plaque is compatible with the plaque that is on the Town Hall relative to the State of N.H.

Vice-Chair Hughes replied it does not look anything like that. She explained this is a formal bronze plaque with raised lettering in gold. She encouraged the members to go online to Erie Landmark's website to look at the National Register plaques.

Alternate Choate asked if she received a price from Timberline.

Vice-Chair Hughes replied she did. She continued that is not going to work because they order the plaque and add whatever the client wants on it. They do not have the plaques in their office. They have to be made from scratch. She pointed out that a smaller 10x7 plaque, with a black background, would be \$320 with Timberline. So, the Commission is "ahead of the game" with the 11x8 formal plaque coming from Erie.

Alternate Sanborn commented that what was presented is great. The price is right, it is a good-looking plaque, it's official and made in the USA.

Vice-Chair Hughes pointed out the plaque will be custom made by Erie. The company also includes the bronze screws to attach it to the building. She thought it might look nice to the left of the town office entrance; however, she will leave that up to the Commission. The reason she does not suggest the front of the building is because people going into the building will be able to see this.

Alternate Choate agreed.

There was some discussion on ordering and how they submit for payment with the Town.

Motion by Anne Richter-Arnold to approve the National Registry of Historic Places plaque by Erie Landmark in the amount of \$267 with Gail Hughes being the point of contact for moving this forward.

Seconded by Elizabeth Sanborn.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Gail Hughes – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Frank Lagana - Aye Bill Epperson – Aye

Motion passed

- **Gazebo Updates – Discussion on Mailers**

Chair Walsh noted that he received some comments and a list of priorities to address from Alex Herlihy, who was not able to attend the meeting. He also noted that he had hoped to have a carpenter friend help with this situation. Unfortunately, his schedule is full for the foreseeable future and this needs to be addressed as soon as possible. At the last meeting, this was left with different folks investigating costs measures and seeking people who might be able to help with this project. He asked if the members have any updates.

Alternate Choate commented that he has not done anything, in terms of pricing. He continued that he started the ball rolling on a sign board (pedestal sign) to tell the story of the gazebo.

Speaking to Mr. Choate, Chair Walsh stated that he will send over Alex Herlihy's comments that he has for a plaque or freestanding sign for the history of the gazebo. He continued that Member Herlihy views the top three points as being; replacing any rotted wood, getting the top back on the bottom section and possibly having it painted a different color. Member Herlihy's other suggestion was that they do not need to spend an exorbitant amount of money on repairs. He feels it does not need restoration, which drives up the pricing. Member Herlihy's thought was raising what they can for the project through the mailer; as well as working with an outside group, such as Friends of Rye Town Hall who indicated this is something that might be of interest to them. Chair Walsh noted this is some of Member Herlihy's thoughts for future funding. He thinks Alex is pretty much on the money. They don't want to "break the bank" but they want to get this up and running. If the Commission can come to an agreement on the annual fundraising appeal, specifically targeting the gazebo, that could help the funding. He pointed out that \$2,000 has already been set aside; however, he imagines it will be more than that amount. He thinks they had discussed at a past meeting that \$4,500 to \$5,000 might cover this project.

Treasurer White pointed out that based on history, this is about the ballpark amount that they could expect from the mailer.

Alternate Sanborn commented if they could raise the funds outside of the \$2,000., they would not have to spend that money. There was a concern that funds might be needed, until they could get going, to do some basic repairs and that is what those funds are for. She reiterated that if they could raise all the money, they would not have to spend the \$2,000.

Referring to the mailer, Chair Walsh asked if everyone had a chance to review it and if there were any additional thoughts. He asked if they should get the mailer out to get this project moving forward. He feels that if this goes out in April or May, it would get into people's minds and people might be looking for projects to get engaged in, now that life might be getting back to some sort of normalcy. He noted that they can hold off on the mailer if the Commission wants.

The Commission reviewed and discussed the wording in the mailer.

Vice-Chair Hughes stated that they do not need to hurry this project. They need to be careful how its handled. An estimate might come back of \$10,000 to do this, which she could not support as a member of the Commission. She suggested holding off on the mailer, until they get a final proposal.

Alternate Choate pointed out that raising money is going to happen no matter what. They could be getting the proposals while they are raising the money.

Member Richter-Arnold commented that she thinks it is a good idea to get the ball rolling on this project. There is the printing time, mailing time and lag time in receiving the money. It is probably going to be a few weeks before this is even going to get out in the mail.

Alternate Sanborn agreed.

Member Richter-Arnold noted that the other piece is the article in Rye Magazine. This mailer should be in people's mailbox when they can easily remember hearing and reading about this already. The more often someone can think of this in a timely manner, the more probability there will be buy-in that someone will want to support it.

Chair Walsh commented he is okay with approving the mailer now, with the noted changes that have been mentioned. He will send it along to the members for a final read through. If there need to be any changes, they can have that discussion at the April 8th meeting.

The Commission discussed the use of the words "restoring" versus "repairing", as there is a big difference when using those words. It was the consensus to use the word "repairing".

Alternate Sanborn commented that since there are so many edits and Alex Herlihy should also review, she does not think there should be an approval until the meeting on April 8th.

The Commission agreed.

Chair Walsh agreed to send the edits to New England Printing and will send the updated mailer to the Commission before the next meeting for review. The Commission will vote on the mailer at the April 8th meeting.

Chair Walsh gave a shoutout to Members Richter-Arnold and Herlihy for the article they wrote for Rye Reflections Magazine. He thought it was a really nice article and thanked them for their work.

Note: *Anne Richter-Arnold left the meeting at 4:28 p.m.*

- **LCHIP – Next Steps**

Chair Walsh noted that back in January, a few of the Heritage Commission Members had a conversation with LCHIP regarding what they liked about the grant application from 2020 and how it could be improved. They liked how it was restricted down to a single project, where the previous ones were more encompassing and focused on the Town Hall at large. This was tailor-made to a window project. LCHIP was very encouraging about applying again. Their suggestion was to have town money to back up the project, which is something they look for when awarding grant money to various committees and organizations. The Heritage Commission had their own funds and also support from The Friends of Town Hall, but they did not have the Town component and that is something they would've like to have seen.

Chair Walsh asked the thought of the members in regards to LCHIP and if they would like to try again. He commented that the unspoken point that he picked up on, over the last two times that he has been involved, is that Rye can afford to take care of their own building and is a well-off town compared to other communities. It is definitely a factor that he is sure goes into the consideration. He noted that the Commission does not have to make a decision right now. He is just putting this out there, if this is something the Commission wants to entertain. The grant process will be opening up within the next month.

Selectmen's Rep Epperson stated that now the Town is over the hump with the Library Trustees and the Parsonage, the Trolley Barn will be going to bid for sale. Part of the funds will go to the Town Hall restoration, specifically the second floor, and the TD Bank building. If there is a month to six weeks to think about this, it will be clearer what is going to be done with the money from the sale. At that time, they can decide specifically what they want to do with the LCHIP Grant. He agreed that the underlying curve is "*why is Rye asking for money, when they have all the money in the world?*". He suggested tabling this discussion, until they can see what will be done with the funds.

Member Sanborn stated that she thinks that LCHIP needs to see that the Town would be in this together. What they have seen for the past several years is the Town being divided about whether or not to tear the Town Hall down and build something new. Now that has been removed and the building is on the Historical Register. There is some momentum happening and they just need a few more pieces to get the approval. She thinks they will ultimately be on the Town's side. She agrees they should sit tight, even if it means a year, to have something more concrete.

The Commission agreed to wait on moving forward on the grant at this time.

- **Open Discussion**

Speaking to Chair Walsh, Vice-Chair Hughes asked if he would send her a note, with the agreement of the rest of the members, authorizing her to order the plaque.

Chair Walsh agreed to send her an email authorizing her to move forward on behalf of the Heritage Commission.

No other business before the Commission.

- *Next Meeting, Thursday, April 8th, 3:30 p.m.*

Adjourn

Motion by David Choate to adjourn at 4:42 p.m. Seconded by Gail Hughes.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Gail Hughes – Aye; Peter White – Aye;

Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Frank Lagana – Aye; Bill Epperson - Aye

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger