

**RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING**

**Thursday, April 8, 2021
3:30 p.m. – via ZOOM**

***Members Present:* Chair Phil Walsh, Treasurer Peter White, Anne Richter-Arnold, Alex Herlihy, Alternates David Choate and Elizabeth Sanborn**

***Also Present:* Bev Giblin (waiting to be re-appointed to the Commission by the Select Board.)**

I. Call to Order

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

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 #869 8465 4386 Password: 751953

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 603-964-5523 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. Peter White
3. Anne Richter-Arnold
4. Alex Herlihy
5. David Choate
6. Elizabeth Sanborn
7. Bev Giblin

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

II. Review of Minutes

- March 11, 2021

Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes of March 11, 2021 as presented. Seconded by Alex Herlihy.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye

Motion passed.

III. Business

1. Treasurer's Report: April 2021

Treasurer Peter White noted that the Commission has \$21,387 in its account. Of that amount, \$15,367 is restricted to Town Hall, \$4,019 is unrestricted funds and \$2,000 is allocated for the gazebo project. He reminded the Commission that in December \$3,500 was allocated to the gazebo project. Also in December, the Commission paid \$1,500 to move the gazebo, leaving a balance of \$2,000 earmarked for the project. He noted that the Commission will be doing a mailer with those funds being restricted for the gazebo. It is anticipated that it will cost more than \$2,000 to do the appropriate repairs.

Treasurer White continued that the Commission has spent \$195 out of the \$4,300 proposed budget for 2021. At this time, the budget has not been approved by the voters, as the election has not yet been held. However, the Commission's expenses are tracking nicely with what they expect the budget to be when it is approved.

The Commission had no questions or concerns with the treasurer's report.

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to accept the treasurer's report for April 2021. Seconded by David Choate.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye

Motion passed.

2. Demolition Review Committee

Alternate David Choate, chair of the DRC, noted that the Committee had one application for 1053 Washington Road. The property has a farmhouse that is connected to a carriage shed, which is connected to a small barn and large barn. The small barn roof has collapsed and is beyond saving. The carriage shed could be saved. The Committee had a site visit with the property owner, his contractor and Steve Bedard, who is a preservation contractor. The Committee pitched to the owner the advantages of saving the carriage shed building and how it would be less expensive than tearing it down to build a new garage. The Committee voted to allow the owner to tear down the building with the hole in the roof and work with him to find a solution for the other building. In the meantime, before a public hearing could be scheduled, the owner and his wife had decided that restoring this building was going to be too expensive. They will be tearing down the small barn some day and patching up the existing carriage shed as much as possible. If down the road they want to come back for a demolition permit they can reapply.

Alternate Choate commented that given all things considered it was not a bad outcome. The carriage shed that the Committee was concerned about will be kept for the time being. He pointed out that it was very helpful having people there; especially, Steve Bedard who could talk them through the whole process. Jay Longtin, who is an architect, was also there and was very helpful with information. The owner, Peter Flanigan, was very concerned about tearing the structures down, but did not know of any alternative. This proves that communication and looking at alternatives is important to the whole process.

3. Historic Structure Taskforce Update (Rye Advocates)

Alternate Choate reported that the taskforce has been renamed to 'Rye Advocates'. The Advocates have a mailer that has been finalized and sent to the printer. The mailer will be ready by the end of next week. He noted that each person in the group has agreed to put in some money to defray these costs, since they do not have a budget. He continued that the letter and survey is going out to about 375 people that own houses that are pre-1901. The hope is to gather a lot of good information over time. The mailer has really been the focus of what the group is working on at this time. The group did talk about trying to get an intern from U.N.H. to help with some of the longer-term research that will need to be done.

Alternate Choate noted there is an article that will be in Rye Magazine in May. He is waiting to hear back from his contact at the Portsmouth Herald in order to get an article in the paper about the mailer.

Member Herlihy pointed out there has already been two notifications of this letter going out; the Historical Society Newsletter and Rye Civic League Newsletter.

Alternate Choate also pointed out that they are also including with the letter and survey form a one-page description of various architectural styles. This will help to give people an idea of what style their house is. He commented that Rye Advocates are meeting monthly and will continue to do so.

IV. Old Business

1. Gazebo Updates: repair costs

Chair Walsh stated that he has contacted three carpenters and two have looked at the gazebo. Another person will be looking at it within the week. The first person was a carpenter recommended by Ricci Lumber in Portsmouth. He was overwhelmed with the work involved. In looking at the gazebo, he thought it would be in the neighborhood of \$5,000 to \$7,000 to repair; however, he felt he did not have enough expertise in this area to make a sound estimate.

Another carpenter, who was recommended by Ace Hardware, looked at the structure. The carpenter has a terrific resume and recommendations. He has done a lot of work with DeStefano Architectural Firm in Portsmouth. He has never done anything with a gazebo but felt that he could give a qualified estimate on what needed to be done. Chair Walsh continued that this carpenter thought the gazebo was in really bad condition with a lot of rot in different places; posts, base, sides and roof. He felt the Commission would be just pouring money into this to work with what they have. The carpenter's suggestion was to essentially rebuild the gazebo from the ground up. He has done some business with a company from Pennsylvania that sells kits. His thought was if the Commission decided to go that way, they could find a design similar to this and rebuild the gazebo from scratch. The carpenter felt it could be saved; however, the Commission would be spending a lot more money. If the gazebo was to be rebuilt with a kit, he felt the cost of about \$5,000 would be reasonable. Chair Walsh noted that this carpenter was willing to donate his time and effort to the project with only charging for materials and labor for one or two of his workers. He also stated that he would look for a deal for the Commission, if they were to go with a kit, to help bring the cost down.

Chair Walsh reiterated that he has another person coming out to look at the gazebo on Saturday to give his thoughts. He opened to the Commission for discussion.

Member Herlihy stated that he also had Jeff Ireland look at the gazebo and he said the same thing. He continued that the structure has to be thought about in two ways. First of all, in regards to the rot, he has watched carpenters take existing structures and splice in new wood where it is needed. Member Herlihy commented he does not agree that the roof is shot. The roof has shingles on it. They are not sending out a mailer asking people for money to repair it, as they were thinking along the lines of restoration and a possible grant. If that is not feasible then they need to forget it.

Alternate Choate stated that he does not think any of these people are restoration carpenters. Steve Bedard has a totally different view than these people and that is what he does for a living. He would be happy to have Mr. Bedard speak with the Commission to give his thoughts on it. He thinks they need to find people that do this type of work.

Bev Giblin agreed with Alternate Choate. She commented that there is always a way to repair things. It is just a matter of finding a way to do it.

Alternate Choate noted that Steve Bedard's estimate was \$5,000 to \$10,000 to do it right. He also noted that he put an email in to Jennifer Goodman at the N.H. Preservation Alliance to see if she had some names of people in this area. He anticipates to hear back from her next week.

Chair Walsh commented that the second carpenter was very nice. However, he got the sense that this gentleman was looking for an easy way out. He agrees with what has been said. The Commission needs to find someone who knows these kinds of structures, is not intimidated and is more open minded. At this point, the Commission should wait to hear from Alternate Choate's contact. He is sure there is someone available, either through Strawberry Banke or one of the other historic societies.

Alternate Choate commented that he thinks it can be restored and it will be. It may be a little longer process; however, he would not hold up the mailer. It is still a noble effort and the money will be used to that end.

Member Herlihy suggested that they may be able to get a small grant to combine it with what people send in from the mailer.

Bev Giblin asked if they could do a fundraiser if necessary.

Chair Walsh replied that he thinks so. He thinks this is going to be a multi-faceted process. The mailer will probably help a little bit. If they have to investigate a grant that would certainly be another angle. Certainly, some kind of fundraising component is something that could be in the not-too-distant future. Ideally, he would like to have an idea of what this would cost so the Commission knows what they are looking at for the mailer. However, he would rather wait and get a credible source who can give an idea of what this will cost.

Alternate Choate pointed out there are other costs associated with the project. There is landscaping and signage that will need to be done. He thinks it will be a \$10,000 project to do it right.

Alternate Sanborn stated that she spoke with her friend who is a landscape architect. She is not able to get to the project until mid-April. Alternate Sanborn commented that in terms of maintenance, they should not overlook the Rye Driftwood Garden Club. They maintain the gardens outside the transfer station. This could be another project for them.

Chair Walsh stated the mailer is the first step. That will raise awareness and help build some excitement.

2. Mailer Approval: printing and mailing costs

Chair Walsh asked Treasurer White what the mailers have typically brought in for funds in previous years.

Treasurer White noted that the first mailer was for the Town Hall and they brought in \$5,000 because it was new and novel. They repeated the Town Hall mailer and never reached the

\$5,000 level. The Commission then trifurcated it for a tree project, which was not very successful. He commented that he thinks this mailer has a lot of potential. It is a new project and people can embrace it. He is reasonably optimistic that there will be a good turnout.

Chair Walsh agreed.

There was some discussion on the costs for the mailer, which is 3,000 pieces to cover the entire Town of Rye and Rye Beach. The mailers will cost \$880 and the postage is \$834, which brings the total cost to \$1,714. It was agreed that another quote was not needed, as they have used this company in the past and know their work.

**Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to approve the costs for the mailer and move forward.
Seconded by Anne Richter-Arnold.**

**Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye;
Alex Herlihy – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye
Motion passed.**

Treasurer White noted that the bulk mail rate has significantly increased, as last time it was .15 and this time it is .26. The Commission will be over budget on this allocation when the budget is approved because of this increase.

Chair Walsh commented that there is nothing they can do about the rate. However, they should take note and make sure they consider this when the Commission prepares their budget for next year's expenses in the fall.

V. New Business

1. Graveyards Records, Requests, Updates

Chair Walsh reported that by the middle of April, he will have an updated list of all the graveyards in town on the Commission's webpage. He will highlight which sites are claimed and which ones are still open. He pointed out there have been a couple of inquiries since the spring newsletter came out. Having the list on the town website will be very critical, so people can see what sites are available. His hope is to do another cleanup like they have done in the past. This has been a great awareness exercise and it will be great to get back to doing this.

Chair Walsh encouraged the Commission to spread the word that there are plenty of graveyard sites available for adoption in town.

2. House Plaques

Referring to the house plaques seen in the center of town, Member Herlihy explained that this project began at the Historical Society early in the century. The plaques are almost gone and the Historical Society would like to turn the project over the Heritage Commission.

Member Herlihy stated that he has received an estimate for the plaques of \$85 per piece. Another estimate came in from a carpenter who quoted \$50. There is also the cost of the lettering on the plaque of about \$35. If the Heritage Commission wanted to take this on and make some money, the plaques may cost \$110 or \$120., depending on what the Commission decides.

Chair Walsh asked the thoughts of the Commission in regards to taking on the project.

Alternate Choate stated it is a logical project for the Heritage Commission.

Alternate Sanborn agreed. She commented they can still work on getting some quotes. She has always believed they should do everything in their power to encourage people to get these. It behooves the Commission to have the plaque on these homes. In concert with the project for the Rye Advocates, since the houses have been identified, as more knowledge is uncovered about these historic homes, they should use the plaque as an encouragement to the current owners that they have something historical in front of them. She thinks the Commission should do this, but it should not be the end-all, be-all money maker. Her feeling is to take it on, get the best price from a vendor and in concert with the Rye Advocates and Historical Society, make sure these homeowners are willing to display the plaque.

Chair Walsh agreed this is a good project for the Heritage Commission to take on.

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn that the Heritage Commission take on the house plaques from the Historical Society. Seconded by Alex Herlihy.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Peter White – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye

Motion passed.

Chair Walsh noted that the Commission will discuss costs at a future meeting. He thanked Member Herlihy for the initiative.

3. NH DOT Environmental Review – Rye tidal culvert under Ocean Blvd., Rte. 1A

Chair Walsh noted that he sent the members a copy of the N.H. Department of Transportation Environmental Review, as it related to the Rye tidal culvert under Ocean Blvd. on Route 1A. The Heritage Commission has been asked if they have any thoughts or opinions. If the Commission has no questions or comments, he can tell DOT that they have no issues. If there are questions and the Commission would like a presentation, he would be happy to set up. He thinks they are just gathering information from various boards and commissions in town.

Alternate Choate asked if they are asking if this will impact the visual environment. He is uncertain of the request.

Chair Walsh replied that his understanding is that they are just reaching out to various boards in town and the Heritage Commission might have some thoughts to share. He was honestly

surprised when he received the email because it didn't seem like it was in the Commission's purview.

The Commission did not have any comments. Chair Walsh will follow up with NH DOT.

4. Open Discussion

Chair Walsh noted they will be staying on Zoom for the foreseeable future, at least until the policy changes at Town Hall. He asked if there would be any objection in moving the meeting to 5:00 or 5:30 moving forward.

There were no objections.

It was noted that Gail Hughes had an update on the plaque for the Town Hall, which will be shipping between April 12th to 19th.

There was some discussion about holding an unveiling ceremony in the future.

Adjournment

Motion by Elizabeth Sanborn to adjourn at 3:55 p.m. Seconded by Anne Richter-Arnold.

Roll Call: Phil Walsh – Aye; Anne Richter-Arnold – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye;

David Choate – Aye; Elizabeth Sanborn – Aye

Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger