

**RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION  
MEETING  
November 09, 2021  
5:00 p.m.  
Rye Town Hall**

***Present: Chair Phil Walsh, Vice-Chair Gail Hughes, Treasurer Peter White, Alex Herlihy, Frank Lagana, David Choate, and Alternate Mae Bradshaw and Elizabeth Sanborn. Select Board Rep, Bill Epperson.***

**Welcome/Call to Order**

Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Walsh announced that the Commission received a thank you note from Elizabeth Sanborn for the flowers that they sent. He extended the Commission's condolences and best wishes to her and her family for their loss.

- **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**
  - **October 15, 2021**

**Motion by Gail Hughes to approve the minutes of October 15, 2021 as presented. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.**

- **Treasurer's Report – Peter White**

Member White reported that currently, the Heritage Commission's general fund balance is \$18,082.98, which includes a donation from the Friends of Town Hall in the amount of \$6,787.40. This amount represents their half of the storm window project. There will be a disbursement in the amount of \$9,014.80 which will have the project paid in full.

The Gazebo fund continues to be at \$6,160 with \$2,000 earmarked from the unrestricted fund and \$4,022 in the restricted fund.

Member White noted that the Commission is on track with this year's budget and will end the year under spent.

The Commission's 2022 budget request was approved by the Select Board in the amount of \$9,500, which includes \$4,800 for the Town Hall spiral staircase project. The plan was to obtain a grant in the amount of \$12,000 with a 60/40 split. The grant would come from the CLG. Although the Select Board has approved the budget, it still has to go before the Budget Committee. He has since heard that the Historic District is organizing all the grants.

Chair Walsh responded to clarify by reading an email that he received. It requested that all grants be coordinated with the Town Administrator and HDC as there are a lot of moving parts to a much bigger plan for the Town Hall. The HDC is also applying for a grant for the Town Hall.

Alternate Bradshaw explained that the HDC is applying to the CLG for a grant to study the interior of the Town Hall for historic restoration. She explained that the spiral staircase project is a “brick and mortar” type project and the CLG will not get involved. This type of project could go to L-Chip, Preservation Alliance, or the Moose Plate Grant programs for funding sources.

Chair Walsh said that he will talk to the Town Administrator about the project.

Member White reported that the Budget Committee will be meeting on Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup> to review budgets. He will be available to present the budget.

Member Herlihy stressed the importance of getting the publicity out about the storm windows and who paid for them. He recommended the Town’s newsletter and Rye Magazine.

Chair Walsh will make sure it is in the articles.

- **Pay Invoice: Storm Windows**

**Motion by Alex Herlihy to pay Ricci Lumber in the amount of \$9,014.80 from the restricted Town Hall funds. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.**

- **Pay Invoice: House Plaques**

Chair Walsh reported that there are two new invoices in the amount of \$65.00 each for the house plaques. These will come out of the unrestricted funds.

**Motion by Peter White to pay Timberline Signs Co. in the amount of \$130 from the unrestricted funds. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.**

**Motion by Peter White to reimburse Mae Bradshaw in the amount of \$400 from the budget for the food for the Communication Program. Seconded by Gail Hughes. All in Favor.**

- **Demolition Review Committee Update**

Member Choate reported that the Demolition Review Committee just met today. They have purview over the mobile homes at Adam’s Mobile Home Park because they are considered real estate. They have approved the removal and replacement of an old mobile in the park.

There is still an issue with 1481 Ocean Blvd. Member Choate is glad to see that the new process is taking hold. He reported that he received an email from the Building Department that had a copy of conditions attached to it asking if the conditions had been met. They wanted to know so they could issue the demolition permit. He responded that the conditions had not been met and put them in touch with Alex Herlihy.

The condition was that the owner volunteered to photographically document the house and the garage. Also, to allow Alex to go through to see if there was anything of historic importance he could put in the museum.

Member Choate expressed the need for more information on the Town's website regarding the demolition process. Most people that are starting a project will go onto the internet first to find information about how to get started. If they can't find the information, they may come into the Town Hall to talk to the Planning Administrator or the Building Inspector. It is much easier to counsel or advocate to the home owner at the beginning of a project, rather than after they have spent thousands of dollars, have the demolition permit in hand and are already entrenched in the idea.

- **Rye Advocates Update**

Member Choate reported that he received an email from Stacy Smith who is on the HDC and the Advocates Committee. She had heard that 999 Washington Road is coming up for demolition. They are assuming it is for a subdivision in the back. It is located directly across from Christine's.

Selectman Epperson said that he thought that was 850 Washington Road. If so that subdivision has been turned down. The developer wanted to put in 5 house lots. However, he did not have enough frontage and there was an issue with the wetland buffer.

It was not clear if they were talking about the same parcel. Member Choate stated that he would try to get more information from Planning Administrator Kim Reed tomorrow.

Member Choate stated that if it is 999 Washington Road, it is a 1940's Cape with a couple of additions. He commented that something that is done in Nantucket is that the owners donate the house to a land trust, who will move the house to land trust property and resell it. However, most of the land trust land in Rye is under Conservation with restrictions, so it may not work. However, he recommended looking into this or other alternatives to demolition.

Alternate Bradshaw reported that it was mentioned at the communication conference that Stratham has asked their electors for sustaining funds to be appropriated every year, just like the Conservation Commission does. They accumulate these funds so that when a historic property comes up, they will be able to purchase it and resell it to someone that wants to restore it. She pointed out that the Heritage Commission is the commission that would do this type of thing, as the HDC is limited in its authorities. The Heritage Commission has the authority to purchase. Alternate Bradshaw stated that she knows the woman in Stratham. She will reach out to her for more information regarding how this works and will report back to the commission.

Member Choate reported that Rye Advocates will be having a workshop next week.

Member Herlihy stated that the information that has been collected to date may become part of a new exhibit at the museum. It will feature selective Rye homes and the stories of their owners over time.

- **Fundraising Subcommittee Update**

Chair Walsh reported that he has spoken to Member Giblin and she is working on setting a date to get the subcommittee up and running. The plan is for late winter or early spring.

### **Other Business**

Member Herlihy reported on an issue on Washington Road where property owners have fenced in an area for their ponies and have cut off access to a historic graveyard that is on their property. The graveyard is in the center of this fenced in area and is unprotected from the ponies. The abutters are very concerned and have contacted Member Herlihy. The building inspector was going to talk to the property owners. It is not clear if he has done that yet.

There is a law governing historic graveyards in the State of New Hampshire. Even if they are on private property, they are not private property. There are 60 historic graveyards in Rye. There was discussion that a letter should be drafted and sent to the property owners of this property to educate them about historic graveyards.

Member Bradshaw will draft a letter. Chair Walsh will follow up with the Building Inspector.

### **New Business**

- **Louise Tallman Award 2021**

Chair Walsh explained that the Louise Tallman Award is given to someone that has contributed or done something for preservation in Rye.

Alternate Bradshaw made a nomination with everyone in agreeance.

There was discussion about reinstating the Heritage end of the year party at the museum to present the award. It was decided to have the party on Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 PM.

- **Rye 2023/Educational Signage Discussion**

Member Herlihy reported that Select Board Rep Tom King and Historic Site President Janet Davis, and some other department heads, have met. They have come up with the idea that the Town will come up with a master calendar. There may be two significant major events; one that will involve the natives of Odiorne in June of 2023 and one relating to the celebration of the town around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Other groups are welcome to plan events for the celebration as long as they inform the Town, so that it is placed on the master calendar.

Member Herlihy felt that getting grants and developing historic signage would be a great project for the Heritage Commission. There are a lot of historic places in town that would warrant one of these signs.

- **Town Hall Monumental Windows**

Member Bradshaw reported that the contactors came to the Town Hall to inspect the windows and adjust their price. It is now around \$18,700 (down from the original \$25,000).

Member Herlihy asked about other projects that must be done to the Town Hall to make it functional verses what she wants are.

Alternate Bradshaw suggested that the floors and the tin ceiling need be restored and the lighting needs to be replicated in some way. She explained that for the things that can be restored, they can apply for historic grants for funding.

Alternate Bradshaw gave the proposal to the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator will draft up a contract for the Select Board's approval. The idea is that The Friends of Town Hall and the Heritage Commission will each pay half of the cost. She also recommended that they look into applying for a Moose Plate Grant. The Moose Plate Grant is a flat \$10,000 grant with no seed money required.

Chair Walsh pointed out that part of the Commission's ongoing mission is not only to champion the spiral staircase and the window project, but to communicate the vision of where the Commission sees this building going and what they feel are the priorities. Communication is key.

### **Gazebo: Next Steps**

Member Choate reported that Jay spoke to Bruce Valley. Mr. Valley said that the Gazebo could stay in the Trolley Barn until the end of the year, after that he is not sure what he will be doing with the property.

There was discussion about what needs to be done to restore it. Member Choate said he would look into getting a Moose Plate Grant to pay for the work and report back to the Commission.

There was discuss about how to protect the Gazebo from the elements during the winter months. No decision was made.

Member Sanborn will get a price to have it shrink wrapped.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Peter White to adjourn at 6:12 p.m. Seconded by Gail Hughes. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted, Dyana F. Ledger