

**RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, October 6, 2022  
5:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall**

***Present:* Chair Bev Giblin, Vice-Chair Gail Hughes, Treasurer Peter White, Alex Herlihy, Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson, and Alternates David Choate, Elizabeth Sanborn, and Karin Nelson**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Giblin called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

**II. Open Member Seat**

**Motion by Alex Herlihy to move David Choate from alternate member to full sitting member. Seconded by Peter White. All in favor.**

A letter from David Choate, along with a recommendation from Chair Giblin, will be sent to the Select Board for appointment.

**III. Chair Comments**

Chair Giblin apologized to the Commission for missing the September meeting. She thanked everyone for continuing with their work to get things done in September.

**IV. Business:**

**• Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer White reported that the Commission has \$19,703 which is an increase of \$497 from the last report. The gazebo funds total \$6,160 and there's \$8,000 in unrestricted funds. The 2022 budget was \$9,500., which includes \$4,550 for grant writing assistance to the Charitable Foundation for work on the historical stairs in the Town Hall. Those funds were not used this year. The other line items in the budget are in line with what was budgeted. It is anticipated that those items will be under budget at year's end.

**Motion by Gail Hughes to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

- **2023 Budget**

Treasurer White noted that the Commission will be meeting with the Select Board on November 3<sup>rd</sup> to present their proposed budget for 2023. He is proposing a budget for 2023 that is in line with 2021. The grant writing that was in the budget for 2022 is not being requested for 2023. The budget for 2023 is \$4,750., which covers, transcription of the minutes, public notices, printing, Memorial Day expenses, postage, and hosting expenses for an event that may happen.

**Motion by Gail Hughes to approve the proposed budget for 2023. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

Treasurer White will be presenting the proposed budget to the Select Board. He will also present projects that were completed by the Heritage Commission in 2022, along with anticipated projects for 2023. He noted that the gazebo project and signage will be presented to the Select Board. He asked for an update on the window project for the Town Hall.

Selectman Epperson pointed out that the three proposed windows are done. The other windows are being postponed through the winter. The issue was lead remediation. The window project might come in slightly over budget because of the remediation issue.

- **Reimbursement to Mae Bradshaw for Memorial Day Supplies**

**Motion by Alex Herlihy to reimburse Mae Bradshaw in the amount of \$172.87 for supplies for the Memorial Day Celebration. Seconded by Bev Giblin. All in favor.**

It was agreed to increase the budget for the Memorial Day supplies to \$200 for 2023. This will make the 2023 proposed budget \$4,800.

- **Sign Project Fundraiser**

Treasurer White noted that the Rye Heritage Commission Signage Subcommittee has identified seven signs that have been created and submitted to a graphic designer for preparation of the signage. The signs are 30"x24" on a single pedestal. The signs are for Native American conflicts, Rye cultural roots, hotels on Ocean Boulevard, historical Rye center, Pulpit Rock Tower, Historic Trefethen's corner neighborhood and store, and Rye Harbor. Treasurer White proposed that the Heritage Commission use funds from the postage and printing budget from 2022 to send out the mailer to the citizens of Rye in November. The signs are approximately \$3,000 per sign. It's been suggested that if a donor wants to have a dedication made on a sign, the donor would underwrite the \$3,000 associated with the sign and be able to have it personalized.

Member Choate suggested having a picture on the mailer showing what the sign will look like.

Treasurer White noted that the mailer could change somewhat with an example of a real sign that the graphic designer prepares. The graphic designer has been asked to send back drafts of five of the signs to the subcommittee. Treasurer White further noted that they are trying to raise

\$21,000. Two of the signs have been spoken for, so they are looking to raise \$15,000 at this time. The goal is to have all signs underwritten. If they have an excess of donations, they will have an opportunity to create additional signs. This project is being done in concert with the Rye 400<sup>th</sup> Celebration. The final signs are intended to be installed by the spring of 2023 once approval is given by the Select Board. Treasurer White pointed out that costs for the mailer include \$1,000 for postage and approximately \$500 for printing.

**Motion by Alex Herlihy to approve the expenses of postage and printing for the fundraising mailer. Seconded by David Choate. All in favor.**

- **Demolition Review Committee**

Member Choate reported that an application for demolition review has been received for 1595 Ocean Boulevard, which is a classic seaside cottage across from Foss Beach. The owners went to the Zoning Board and received approval for a tear down and rebuild. He spoke with the owner after that meeting. However, they can't make the existing house work because of code issues and challenges for their handicapped child. The Demolition Review Committee will be meeting next week to review this case. They will probably be holding a site walk and public hearing. Member Choate pointed out that they have the ability to notify the abutters by certified mail now; however, there are only two abutters for this property.

Member Herlihy explained there are only one or two significantly historic houses between Washington Road and Ray's. This is one of them, which is early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Member Choate noted that he will keep the Commission updated. He would like members of the commission to attend the public hearing. He continued that there's another house in that area that is being torn down (1691 OB). The Demolition Review Committee did not deem that property to be historically significant.

- **Gazebo**

Member Choate reported that Corey Colwell, TF Moran Engineering, is meeting with him on October 11<sup>th</sup> to look at the gazebo. Mr. Colwell is a civil engineer and does a lot of work in the town. They are going to discuss the most cost-effective way of siting the gazebo and will look at the access from the parking lot in front of the church. The plan will have to be engineered and may need to go before the Select Board and Planning Board for informational purposes.

Member Herlihy noted that he spoke with the gentleman in charge of the work at the Town Hall Annex. The gentleman said that he and his boss need to find a time they can meet with the Commission to discuss the gazebo. Member Herlihy will follow up on a time.

Member Choate pointed out that the goal is to get the construction work for the gazebo done this fall, so it can be shrink wrapped for the winter.

Treasurer White commented that it is anticipated that the annex will be completed by Thanksgiving. The gazebo work would be done between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Member Choate stated that he will be submitting an application to the Rye Garden Club for a \$500 grant.

Alternate Sanborn stated that the person who handles shrink wrapping looked at the gazebo. He said that it shouldn't be shrink wrapped because it's wood and condensation could make things worse.

- **Graveyard Adoptions**

Chair Giblin noted that two people have been sent letters to confirm their adoptions.

Member Herlihy spoke about keeping a document listing the graveyards, who has adopted it and their contact information. He suggested that someone be designated to keep that information.

Chair Giblin agreed to speak with Janice Ireland about this task.

Member Herlihy also spoke about the overgrowth at the Bracket Road burial ground. At one time, there was a caretaker for this site. However, it is now overgrown and that person may no longer be able to do the work. The Commission does not have this person's contact information.

It was agreed that this would be a good topic for the next town newsletter. Members who have ideas for the article should send them to Chair Giblin.

- **Rye Advocates**

Member Choate noted that Rye Advocates meets once per month. They welcome people who are interested in joining. The Advocates focus has been documenting pre-1901 houses. Small group sessions have been held at the library teaching people how to research the age of their home. The intent for starting this project is to try to prevent people from tearing down their houses. If they learn and appreciate the history of the home, they may be more sensitive to inappropriate additions or tearing it down.

Referring to the Demolition Review Committee, Alternate Sanborn explained that it always feels like they are a little late on the trigger and that's the last permit issued. What's been found is that people have already spent their money on architects and have set up their builders. The "ship has sailed" by the time it gets to demolition review. Part of the intent is to have information on the historic homes that are in Rye. By doing this, the current owner may gain an appreciation for what they have or information can be provided to realtors in town so they can educate new buyers on what the house represents. The idea is to provide realtors an easy means for enhancing the sale. This is one of the objectives.

## **V. New Business**

- There was some discussion about setting up a Rye Beach Heritage Commission. Alternate Nelson will set up a meeting with the Rye Beach Commissioners for the Heritage Commission members.

- Member Choate spoke to the Commission about the idea of forming a Heritage District Overlay, which provides a certain level of protection. The Town of Stratham has adopted a Route 33 Heritage District to help protect some of the houses remaining on Portsmouth Avenue from becoming commercial. Member Choate will email the information he received from Stratham to Chair Giblin to send out to commission members.
- Member Choate reported that the Historic District Commission is working on the idea of expanding the Historic District down Central Road to the house on the left that abuts the cemetery. He has been researching information on how this can be done correctly. The intent is to work on this project for the 2024 town warrant. He pointed out that they are also going to be applying for a CLG Grant to do an inventory of the properties, which will give a lot of information. He also pointed out there are about eleven properties being considered for the expansion of the Historic District. If this passes, the next step would be to go down Washington Road.
- Rye Advocates will be holding the next deed research session for historic homes on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., at the library. People have to register for the class. There will be only three teams at each class.
- Member Herlihy made a request for funds from the Heritage Commission to set up a Rye Advocates website. Information about historical homes and materials that are being generated by the Advocates will be posted on the site.

**Motion by Alex Herlihy for Rye Heritage Commission to grant \$30 to the Rye Advocates for a domain name. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.**

➤ **Next Meeting to be held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5:30 p.m., at Town Hall.**

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Peter White to adjourn at 6:43 p.m. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger