

## **RYE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, September 30, 2020**

**5:00 p.m. – via ZOOM**

***Members Present: Co-Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, , David Choate, Alex Herlihy, Karen Stewart, Katharine Brown, Alternates: Stacy Smith and Lydia Tilsley – Selectmen's Rep. Mae Bradshaw***

### **I. Call to Order**

Co-Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

### **II. READING of ATTESTATION**

#### **Statement by Kaitlyn Coffey:**

As a member of the Rye Historic District 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: 963852 or by clicking on the following website address: [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) ID #889-2718-7024.
- 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](http://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 Janice at [JIreland2@town.rye.nh.us](mailto:JIreland2@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:

- David Choate
- Alex Herlihy
- David Choate
- Katharine Brown
- Lydia Tilsley
- Stacey Smith
- Kaitlyn Coffey
- Mae Bradshaw
- Karen Stewart

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

### **III. Introduction of new and current members**

Alternate Member Stacey Smith introduced herself. Ms. Smith stated that she has lived in Rye for almost 26 years. She lives at 51 Central Road. She raised her two children in Rye and they are now on their own. She is a Senior Partner at Jackson, Jackson, and Wagner. They are a public relations and management consulting firm. A lot of their clients are non-profits that work on land use.

Alternate Member Lydia Tilsley stated that she moved to Rye a little over a year ago. She lives at 17 Central Road in a historic home that is not in the District. She has been working with Alex Herlihy to update the documentation on the historic houses in town.

Co-Chair Coffey seated Alternate Tilsley for Member Tegeder and Alternate Smith for Member Kent.

### **IV. Update on Historic District Design Guideline project**

Selectman Bradshaw explained that the Historic District Commission applied for an \$8,000 grant for CLG and was awarded \$20,000. The Commission has hired Dominique Hawkins of Preservation Design Partnership, in Pennsylvania. Ms. Hawkins did the guidelines for Portsmouth and Exeter. Ms. Hawkins will be doing Star Island and the New Hampshire Isle of Shoals, along with the Town Center Historic District. Ms. Hawkins and her assistant will be in Town from October 19<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Member Herlihy will greet them and take them to the museum and give her some history of Rye. Jack Farrell will be taking them to Star Island. Ms. Hawkins has projected that the guidelines will be ready by spring. Ms. Hawkins' plan is to visit Rye at least three times. She will be at the Public Hearing for the adoption of the guidelines.

Selectman Bradshaw recommended that the Historic District Commission members take a look at the Portsmouth and Exeter guidelines, in order to formulate some questions and comments for Ms. Hawkins. She also suggested that the Commission meet with Ms. Hawkins on the last day of her visit.

## **V. Organization of Commission**

- **Officers: Chairman & Vice Chairman**

Selectman Bradshaw explained that at the last meeting there was a vote to make Alex Herlihy the chair; however, they have to revote now that he is a member. Also, Kaitlyn Coffey would be the vice-chair and Karen Stewart will be the Secretary.

**Motion by Stacey Smith to appoint Alex Herlihy as chair, Kaitlyn Coffey as vice-chair and Karen Stewart as Secretary. Seconded by David Choate.**

**Roll Call Vote: Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye;**

**David Choate – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Stacey Smith – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye;**

**Motion passed.**

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Member Choate reminded the members that at the last meeting they talked about setting up a walk-thru of the Parsonage with Steve Bedard of Bedard Preservation and Restoration. Member Choate asked the Board of Selectmen for permission to do this Monday night. He reported that there was some resistance from the select board, partly because they are not sure what they are going to do with the building and they want to keep their options open. Member Choate told the Board that the members of the HDC felt that it is important that they get a better understanding of the building. The swap with Dan Philbrick was presented to the Town with the fact that the building was going to be preserved and restored, and not torn down. Member Choate commented that he still does not see what harm there would be for the Commission to go through the building with an expert preservation contractor. The information does not have to be made public and could go to the Board of Selectman in the form of a short memo. The Board of Selectmen asked that the Historic District Commission send a request in writing to the Board, so that the request is coming from the Commission and not from just David Choate.

Member Stewart asked for an update on the TD Bank and Parsonage exchange.

Member Choate responded that the deal with Mr. Philbrick is dead. The Selectmen are probably going to do a warrant article in order to sell the building. His concern is that if there is a possibility to renovate the building, he would like to see that become part of the deed restrictions, to prevent it from being torn down.

Member Stewart responded that as the chair of the Town Center Committee, she has received official notice that the exchange with Mr. Philbrick is over. She will now reconvene the Town Center Committee and partition the select board that prior to making the decision to sell the Parsonage, they allow it to be a parallel conversation with the Committee, to factor that building into their consideration and deliberations.

Selectman Bradshaw explained that all of the votes that have been gone through in the past twelve years have been focused on one thing. That is to provide ample office space for the town employees to work. That is still the problem and the primary goal of the Selectmen. The Town has tried for a 4 million and a

2.5-million-dollar solution, neither of which work. They had an almost “free deal”, but they couldn’t get the parking to make the deal work. So, for that reason the Town is out a million dollars. It is now the obligation of the Board of Selectmen to find suitable work space for the employees. Part of what is needed is to put that as the priority. She added that it would be lovely to have a park in the middle of town, but that is going to cost money. There will be costs associated with raising that money, finding other space and building some other space or expanding other space for the town employees. The way to engage enough money to secure a place that is healthy for the employees is to sell the Parsonage and to sell it for its best possible use for the best possible price.

Selectman Bradshaw explained that the Historic District Commission has an inventory. The inventory states that the Parsonage is not a historic building, it has been restored as a historic building and it is a historic site. It would be nice to have a monument there or something that explains the history of the site. Selectman Bradshaw also pointed out that the appraiser stated the value of the property is in the land, which could be about \$350,000 but this is not enough to take care of the problem for the employees. What she is objecting to, in what Member Choate is proposing, is that they are way ahead of themselves. They do not know who the potential buyers may be and they don’t want to influence that in any way. They don’t want someone to do a walk through in half an hour and come up with an opinion that it is salvageable, but hasn’t got the ability to say how much that will cost. They don’t want that kind of information on the record that would influence the process.

Member Choate noted that as the Historic District Commission they should have that information.

Selectman Bradshaw stated that the ordinance stated that when a plan to tear down a building comes before the Commission; it is not allowed until the Commission is satisfied with what is going in its place.

Member Stewart stated that she agreed with Member Choate and doesn’t see why it would be a problem for the members of the Commission to do a walk through with a historic preservation expert, in order to allow them to understand what they are dealing with.

Selectman Bradshaw said she thought that would be a great idea when someone comes to the select board and says they want to buy the property, whether to restore it as is or to tear it down. To have that resource available to them at the time, when they know what they are looking for, would be great. If Member Choate could extend the proposal to his friend Mr. Bedard at that time it would be very beneficial.

Member Choate stressed that his point is being missed. He feels that if there is any indication that the building can be preserved, then it should not be sold with any indication that it can be torn down. It should be sold with a covenant or deed restriction that it will not be torn down.

Member Smith said she doesn’t understand why there is hesitation about having a historic preservation person do a walk through. She asked what is wrong with having an expert go through and tell the HDC what is there that could and should be salvageable. What is there that is valuable? Obviously, there is something that the Selectmen don’t want to compound the issue with; however, as the HDC, they have an obligation to know what is there that may be of significance, which should be inventoried or documented.

Selectman Bradshaw said that if the expert was coming in with the agenda to just inventory with the HDC what is salvageable and historical, she would agree with that; however, the Board does not want an option of a half hour walk through that something is restorable or not restorable.

Member Choate did not agree.

Member Smith suggested that having a historic preservationist look at the building could potentially strengthen the Board of Selectmen's position with the public. It's just a strategic communication issue.

**Motion by David Choate to ask the Board of Selectmen to allow the HDC and Steven Bedard of Bedard Preservation and Restoration to walk through the Parsonage, to advise the HDC on the condition of the building. Seconded by Karen Stewart.**

**Roll Call Vote: Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Stacey Smith – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Selectman Bradshaw - Abstain. Motion passed.**

## **VII. Community Survey Idea Presented by Mae Bradshaw**

Selectman Bradshaw stated that she and Member Tilsley attended a meeting regarding inventorying the historic structures in town. She noted that it is time for the HDC to write a letter of intent to the CLG Program. She asked if someone would have time to develop a survey form of each of the historic properties in the District. The timing would be good to get a grant to get this started. The survey includes a title exam, a physical description of the property and photographs of the property. It would be a good basis for a walking tour, as the next step. They could develop a brochure that features the buildings and have a walking tour starting at Town Hall. She and Burt took the walking tour in Kingston. She stated that it was very interesting to read the history of what was there and how it has changed, or not changed, and about the features of the buildings. The letter of intent is due November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Member Herlihy pointed out that the Historic Society has a lot of the information regarding who built the houses and when, especially on the older homes. That information was originally gathered by Louise Tillman. Now Member Tilsley is updating the information where Ms. Tillman left off.

Selectman Bradshaw read what the CLG is asking for:

1. Geographical context
2. Historical Background
3. Applicable Historic context
4. Architectural Description and Comparable Evaluations
5. Statement of Significance
6. Period of Significance
7. Statement of Integrity
8. Boundary Justification
9. Boundary Description
10. Bibliography and Reference
11. Photographs and area Map

Member Herlihy reiterated that they have a fair amount of this information and that someone could take the information to finish it up and make it more professional.

Selectman Bradshaw stated that it is something that the HDC could take on as a project as a group. However, she is sure that most members don't have enough time to take it on. She would like to find someone to take this on. There are funds available to hire a professional to help with this project. She would like to have someone maybe write the letter of intent and the grant application.

Member Tilsley clarified that the objective would be to define the project and make sure that it doesn't duplicate or conflict with the Historical Society's project.

Selectman Bradshaw explained that the information would be sent to the State Division of Historical Resources. If found to be true, the State Division of Historic Resources declares the area a historical resource of the State. This helps to get grants from other originations within the State. If there are commercial properties in the area, it could also help to get tax benefits.

Member Tilsley stated that this would be worth exploring. While she doesn't have a ton of time, she would be willing to help.

Member Smith said that this would be something that she would be willing to help with, but would not want to take it on alone.

Selectmen Bradshaw suggested that Member Tilsley, Member Smith and herself could work on it together. She added that it would help the Town Center Committee if the District had this designation.

### **VIII. Introduction of Project from Lydia Tilsley**

Member Tilsley explained the project that she and Member Herlihy are working on at the Historic Society. At the Historic Society there is a notebook that has pictures and stories of the oldest houses in Rye. The project is two things; one is to update the notebook with new pictures of the houses and the second part is to add in missing houses. She started by creating a data base of the houses with their dates and style. She is also reaching the ownership line through the deeds back to the founders of the Town.

Selectman Bradshaw pointed out that another reason to have this inventory done is because it can be use with the Towns GIS System. As a person searches a property in the Town's GIS, this information will become available to them. Selectman Bradshaw noted that she would write the letter of intent.

### **IX. Other Business**

- Selectman Bradshaw reminded the Commission that they need to come up with their budget for 2021. Chair Herlihy will have to present it to the Board of Selectmen on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Selectman Bradshaw stated that she has started a tentative budget that has about a 10% increase over last year. There is still a question of how much to put in for a grant match.

- Member Choate announced that the Preservation Alliance Seven to Save virtual program presentation is on October 20, 2020 at 4:30, via Zoom.
- Member Choate reminded the Commission that he is looking to form a subcommittee to try to figure out how to designate non-protected structures throughout the community in some way. Right now, the only protected older structures are in the Historic District. The subcommittee will be made up of two representatives from the Demolition Review Committee, Rye Heritage Commission, Rye Historic District Commission, and the Rye Historical Society. He would like to get this group going. It is not going to be a short-term process. He asked if there is anyone on the HDC that would be willing to participate.

Selectman Bradshaw recommended Member Katharine Brown

Member Herlihy stated that he would be one of the two from the Historical Society and he recommended Lydia Tilsley to be the second member, if she was willing.

Member Choate stated that Elizabeth Sanborn and Jay Longtin are coming in from Heritage.

Members Brown and Smith both volunteered.

## **X. Adjourn**

**Motion by Kaitlyn Coffey to adjourn at 2:25 p.m. Seconded by Stacey Smith.**

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Kaitlyn Coffey –Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Stacey Smith – Aye; Alex Herlihy – Aye; Selectman Bradshaw - Abstain.**  
**Motion passed.**

**NEXT MEETING:** To be scheduled during Dominique Hawkins October 19<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup> visit to the Town. An email to the members with that date will be sent out.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger