

Rye Historic District Commission
Wednesday, February 9, 2022
5:30 PM
Rye Town Hall

Present: Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, David Choate, Stacey Smith, Karen Stewart, Select Board Rep Tom King, Alternate Mae Bradshaw and Lydia Tilsley (arrived at 5:53 p.m.)

I. Call to Order

Chair Coffey Called the minute to Order at 5:40 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance

II. Seating of Alternates

Alternate Bradshaw was seated for Member Kent.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Wednesday, December 8, 2021

The following was noted:

- Page 3, 4th Paragraph should read: **For instance, the Town has someone that does social media but it isn't her full-time job.**
- It should be noted that anywhere in the minutes Member Smith is referred to as an Alternate; replace with **Member Smith.**
- Page 12, 2nd Paragraph should read: **Member Choate stated that if all the Rye Town Center Committee Members were present at the meeting, they should've said that they really didn't have a chance to review the plans and asked for the meeting to be tabled.**

**Motion by David Choate to approve the December 8th meeting minutes as amended.
Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

b. January 12, 2022

The following was noted:

- Page 1, 1st paragraph should read: **In light of the new guidelines, she feels this should be brought back to the surface.**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the January 12th meeting minutes as amended.
Seconded by Karen Stewart. All in Favor.**

Chair Coffey introduced and welcomed two members of the public in attendance at the meeting, Mary and John (no last name was given). They live in the Historic District. Chair Coffey stated that Mary is interested in becoming an alternate on the Commission. She also mentioned that Mary and John have started an application for a project to repair their porch. They also have ideas for a project involving a fence on their property in the future.

IV. Application Updates

Chair Coffey explained some of the background on the recent update to the application process. She explained that the Commission just finished the guideline project that has given the Commission a set of standards to follow while evaluating projects that come before the Commission. The Commission worked for over a year with a preservation expert/architect that helped to write the guidelines. One of the goals of the Commission with the guideline project was to use the guidelines to clean up the application process. The Commission members felt that they could make the application clearer and felt that the application was out dated. One of the things that came out of this work was a technical review committee, so by the time an application is presented to the Commission, it is not the first time anyone has looked at it. This gives the home owner a chance to pull together any materials or additional documentation that may be needed for the formal meeting. The review committee has five days to review the application and get it back to the chair with their comments and request. This timing lines up with the requirements of the two-week window requirement, if the project has to go to a public hearing.

David Choate, Daryl Kent and James Tegeder are the first team of three on the review committee. They have already reviewed Mary and John's application and have sent their comments back to Chair Coffey. They would like to see a materials list and a sketch.

Member Smith suggested that the technical review committee should submit a short notice of their findings to the Commission, so that all members are aware of what the status is on the application.

There was discussion regarding adding photos of the existing site as a requirement to the application process. If anyone has historic photos of subject properties, it would be helpful. Member Choate and Alternate Tilsley are working on updating the application. The goal is to have something for the members to look at during the next meeting. The building department will be one of the first departments to go electronically for their permitting. The goal of the HDC is to hopefully be able to convert their application to an electronic document in order to be in line with the building department.

Chair Coffey noted that she has spoken with Town Administrator Bergeron notifying her of the Commission's intent to update their applications and the ordinance. The Commission will be changing the ordinance with the timeline, fees and the general process. This will have to go on the 2023 warrant for voter approval.

It was recommended that the Vice-Chair be the point person between the applicant and the technical review committee. It was noted that there is currently no vice-chair on the HDC. Chair Coffey will have the nomination and election on a vice-chair on the agenda for the next meeting.

V. CLG 2022 Grant Information

Member Bradshaw explained the process:

1. Prepare a Letter of intent; explaining what the Commission is hoping to do.
 - a. Seeking funds on a 60/40 basis or better
 - o The project will be \$20,000 and the HDC has \$8,000 in matching funds.
 - b. Asking for funds for an architectural study of space use of the first and second floor of the Town Hall building.
 - c. This is to help the Select Board with their decision-making process as to how the space will be allocated moving forward, once the town annex move has occurred.
 - d. The town annex building renovation RFPs have gone out and the bid results on phase one are due February 28th. The Select Board will open the bids at their next meeting following the 28th and decide if there is any bid that they can accept.
2. The funding will not be available for approximately eight to ten months.
3. The Town would then send the RFP out for bids, in order to engage a professional architect.
4. The results from the study will be out approximately a year and a half.
5. The Town would then send out an RFP for construction bids.
6. The Select Board would then take the results to a warrant article for the voters' approval and funding.

There is also a National CLG Advisory group that the Commission can apply to. There is an application fee of a small amount. This group will come to the town and review the town's historic preservation needs and give advice and funding.

The members agreed that it would be a good idea to apply for both, considering there is no guarantees that they will be rewarded the CLG funding.

Member Bradshaw will draft the letter of intent for both.

VI. RHC signage subcommittee

Chair Coffey explained that the Rye Heritage Commission is developing a signage subcommittee for the 400th Anniversary celebration.

Member Bradshaw explained that Alex Herlihy is looking for two people from each of the Heritage Commission, the Historic District Commission and the Historical Society to join the 2023 Historic Signage Subcommittee. They will be doing research for historic signage to locate around town.

The subcommittee will:

- a. Research historical signs from other towns
 - Size, fonts, subject matter, etc.
- b. Sites in town that would be appropriate for a historical sign placement
- c. Research grant and fund-raising opportunities for the project
 - Partnerships with business owners, etc.

Final Approval would go to the HDC, for the Historic District, and to the Select Board.

Anyone who is interested in joining the subcommittee should contact Alex Herlihy.

VII. Other Business

Chair Coffey reported that after the last meeting, she sent letters to the church, the library, and homeowners in the district that have signs up. She noted that all the signs were removed for a while, but she has noticed that the library's sign has popped back up.

Member Bradshaw explained that if the sign is up for less than two weeks it is okay. Permanent or commercial signs are not allowed. She suggested that this maybe the time to send the Library Trustees a copy of the district guidelines, outlining the sign section for within the district. She also recommended setting out the link to where the guidelines are on the website. She pointed out that not only do the library trustees need to know this information; but others need to know; such as the residents, real estate professionals, other town committees, boards and commissions.

In regards to temporary signs in the district, it was suggested that the Commission should do some proactive thinking and talking in a work session, to come up with a recommendation that is favorable and affordable that could be used for temporary signage within the district. The Commission will discuss this more at the next meeting.

There was also discussion about hosting a forum for the property owners in the district to get the guidelines out to them.

Chair Coffey reminded the members that they have talked about having a land use summit meeting between all the land use boards. She asked if this is something that they are still interested in or if they would prefer to put it on the back burner for now.

Member Bradshaw reported that at the last Heritage meeting, they discussed the changes in their Commission's vision, and the need to get organized with the chapter in the Master Plan on civic life. The Heritage Commission is talking about rewriting the chapter. Because the visioning plan for the whole town is in process, this would be the right time for the Heritage Commission to think about what they care about. The Heritage Commission's homework is to become familiar with the current civic section of the Master Plan and to go back with ideas of how it could be strengthened. She suggested that it would be helpful if this Commission would the same.

Member Bradshaw felt that the HDC is not prepared to go to a land use summit meeting. They would be prepared if they were ready to state what their vision would be for a master plan. At

that point, the HDC could communicate with the other commissions and boards about their visions. When everyone has a clear sense of what their visions are, then there could be constructive negotiations between all the land use boards.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that the Planning Board has two Committees that are key to HDC; one is the Rules and Regulations and the other is Long Range Planning. She recommended meeting with those two committees and giving them the clearest vision of the HDC.

Member Choate reported that he was looking in the new guidelines for how they handled temporary signs and it is not addressed.

Chair Coffey said that she would reach out to Ms. Hawkins to let her know that they will have an amendment.

Chair Coffey talked to the members about the HDC hosting an event to showcase the Town Center. She was thinking of having a candlelight stroll to showcase some of the properties in town center from the Town Hall and the church to Parsons Field. She envisioned they could close the road and then have a tree lighting. She also thought that they could create lighted signs that share the dates and some of the history of the homes. She stated that they could get the church involved and have carolers. She thought that it could be something they could do right after Thanksgiving.

Member Bradshaw suggested having a narrative that people could listen to on their phones that talks about the history of homes. Alex is great with the history and James is great with technology.

Alternate Tilsley pointed out that the Historical Society has done a lot of recordings on YouTube. She suggested partnering with them and the Heritage Commission.

Selectman King pointed out how nicely this idea would play into the 400th Anniversary Celebration.

- **Next Meeting: March 9th at 5:30 PM Town Hall**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion By David Choate to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM. Seconded by Tom King. All in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted
Dyana F. Ledger