

**TOWN OF RYE – Historic District Commission  
MEETING  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022  
5:30 PM  
Rye Town Hall**

**Present: Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, David Choate, Karen Stewart, Stacey Smith, Selectman's Rep Tom King, and Alternates Katharine Brown (via Zoom) and Lydia Tilsley**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

**II. SEATING OF ALTERNATE**

**III. BUSINESS**

- **Approval of Minutes 3/9/2022**

**Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes as Presented. Seconded by Karen Stewart. All in Favor.**

- **Review alternate application from Mary Mitchell**

Chair Coffey introduced Mary Mitchell to the members.

Ms. Mitchell stated that her move and experiences with renovating 562 Washington Road has opened her eyes as to what it takes to be in the Historic District. She has three children who were raised in Rye. They all went to Portsmouth High School and her youngest is now in college. She works at Learning Skills Academy in Rye where she teaches reading, specializing with children with dyslexia. She is the former coach of the Portsmouth swim team and is a member of the Beach Committee. Ms. Mitchell has lived in Rye for 18 years.

**Motion by David Choate to recommend Mary Mitchell to the Select Board as an alternate for the Historic District Commission. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

**Motion by David Choate to recommend the reappointment of Karen Stewart to the Select Board as a member of the of the Historic District. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

- **Review of appointment for permanent full-time seat**

Chair Coffey stated that this seat was vacated by Daryl Kent. His seat expired the end of March and has to be posted for thirty days. This will be a new term. She also reported that there is an alternate seat available.

Member Choate recommended trying to find someone with construction experience.

- **Temporary Sign Update**

Member Choate reported that he reached out to Portsmouth Sign Company and asked them to do some research. He asked for some links to websites for signs that are different than the white plastic A-frame signs. They sent a couple of links to sites for the Commission to look at.

Member Smith stated that she liked the swing board signs. She thought that they just looked classier. Chair Coffey reminded the members that the intent is to make the temporary signs in the District more uniformed. She stated that the Commission could possibly work with the church, school and public safety building. However, she didn't know if the Commission's budget could handle anything like this right now. She added that the Commission could partner with them to find something that is more historically appropriate.

Member Brown suggested that the Commission could design a permanent frame that the posting could be slid into.

Selectman King did a quick sketch of a concept for a temporary sign and explained the idea to the members. It consisted of permanent wood posts. The message center (sign) would be a heavy composite material.

Member Choate recommended taking the concept and design to Timberline Signs. They have a graphic design department that could develop it further.

Member Brown suggested that this issue will be easier to deal with once the TAP Grant work is finished. The sidewalks, bike lanes and the whole area will look more finished.

Chair Coffey responded that the Commission could start to investigate this, as it could take some time. Also, with their CLG membership, there is a flyer that is sent out that list things that there is grant money for. There was something about signs. She will reach out to them for more clarification. If this is something that would be covered by a grant, she will let everyone know and maybe they could go for a grant next year.

Selectman King wondered if it would help to reach out to the library, church, and school, to let them know that the Commission is looking into this, to see if they have any ideas and if they are willing to be a part of it.

Member Choate commented that it would be better to have an example drawn up before approaching them.

Member Stewart talked about the costs of the permanent frame idea and suggested improving the temporary sandwich board style sign. She suggested having a wooden frame with panels that slid in place, so it would be heavy enough that it wouldn't blow over.

Chair Coffey stated that she has been asked by some residents in the District about putting up the "Say No to Pease Cargo" signs on their property. She asked the Commission members their thoughts.

Member Choate felt it was too premature, as it has to get approval from the federal government. He felt that the process should be monitored and they should wait and see.

Selectman King pointed out that the purpose of the signs was to get people knowledgeable about the issue and to get signatures on a petition. The purpose was to draw attention to the project. He noted that ProCon (one of the contractors) is going to present their proposal to the PDA in early May.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the issue is not about whether the Commission agrees with the issue matter of the sign. It is about the sign guidelines in the Historic District.

Member Tilsley talked about the committee that Alex Herlihy has setup of five people to identify approximately twenty places around town that are important historic points in Rye. They will then place a sign at these places to describe the historic significance of that area. The criteria used for selection is agricultural, schools, churches, hotels, government, Rye in war, etc. Mr. Herlihy has a list of about 100 places from which the committee will try to identify the 20 most important. They are targeting 2023 (400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for Rye). They are also looking for funding sources. She showed the members pictures of the proposed signs.

Member Tilsley reported that there are some areas within the Historic District that the committee is looking at. She stated that if they choose one of those areas, they would be coming before the Historic District with an application for approval. The committee just met last Friday for the first time. Member Tilsley promised to keep the Historic District informed as things progress.

Chair Coffey reported that Mae Bradshaw had received an email from Randy at the Preservation Alliance. They have not officially voted on the new guidelines and that has to be on record in order to close out the grant.

**Motion by Karen Stewart that the Historic District Commission formally adopts the new guidelines and will promote them within the Historic District for all residents, in anticipation of their inclusion in the zoning ordinance at the Town Meeting of March 2023. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

- **Application work session**

Chair Coffey explained that the application needs to be finalized prior to the end of the year because it will have to go to town council for review along with the guidelines. This happens prior to it going to the Rules and Regulations committee for zoning ordinance changes and then town vote in March. She

pointed out that they are modeling it on the one used by Exeter. Members Choate, Tilsley and Coffey will get together to develop a draft of the application and send it out to the other members for their review.

- **Other Business**

Selectman King reported that the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee will be meeting on Friday. He suggested that maybe the kick off could be the candle light stroll organized by the HDC. He recommended that Chair Coffey talk to Lt. Gallant at the Fire Department. Lt. Gallant is the organizer of the Christmas parade. There was talk about getting a partner organization to help, such as the library.

There was discussion regarding how to highlight the homes in the District. Suggestions included: having a wreath on the doors with a banner that displays the year of the home; having a flyer printed up that list the homes and some of their history; having volunteers (dressed in historic costumes or not) walking with the group, doing short narrations about the homes; having the home owner meet the group in front of their house to do a short narration.

Selectman King suggested that someone from the Historical Society may be able to help, if the home owner is not able. There was talk about asking the church to have their choir singing Christmas Carols and the finale would be the lighting of the tree in Parsons Field. There was a suggestion of having the school's band, choir, and music department involved as well.

Chair Coffey stated that she would put together a summary of the ideas, to show to the church, library, Historical Society, and Tate and Foss.

- **Next Meeting: May 18, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by David Choate to adjourn at 6:57 p.m. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Dyana F. Ledger