

**RYE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING**

**Wednesday, December 13, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Present: *Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, David Choate, James Tegeder, Lydia Tilsley, Karen Stewart, Stacey Smith, and Selectmen's Rep Bob McGrath*

Members not Present: *Mae Bradshaw and Katherine Brown*

I. Call to Order

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Seating of Alternates
None

III. Approval of Minutes

- 10/11/2023

The following correction was noted: Jennifer Goodwin should be **Jennifer Goodman**.

Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes of October 11, 2023 as amended. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor.

- 11/8/2023

The following corrections were noted: The word esthetic should be **aesthetic**.
The spelling for Regan Ruedig should be **Reagan Ruedig**.

Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes of November 8, 2023 as amended. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor.

IV. Review of Area Form Survey draft with Reagan Ruedig

Reagan Ruedig met with the Historic District Commission to review the draft for the area form survey, which was prepared to define the existing district boundaries and look at potential properties that could be considered for expansion. Ms. Ruedig will be finalizing the report and sending it to the Department of Historical Resources (DHR) for review and approval as a national register eligible district. HDC Members have received a copy of the draft report and have been asked to review the document and send back their comments.

V. Review of CLG Grant, removal of 70 Central and pending approval adding the Town Green

Member Choate reported that he and Chair Coffey have been meeting with the Rules and Regulations Committee in regard to the proposed expansion of the Historic District, which involves seven properties along Central Road. The Rules and Regs Committee has voted to move the proposed warrant article to the Planning Board on the 19th. If the Planning Board is agreeable, it will be moved to a public hearing in January. The one outstanding question is whether the Town Green can be included in the expansion or not. Member Choate noted that he made a presentation to the Select Board recently about the Town Green. The Selectmen seemed amendable but wanted to check with town counsel to be sure there are no underlying reasons why it cannot be done. A warrant article for the expansion is proposed for town vote in March.

VI. Subcommittee appointment to review the HDC bylaws

Referring to the HDC application update, Chair Coffey noted that the Rules and Regulations Committee has asked for further clarification on some items from town counsel. She continued that Rules and Regs pulled up HDC's bylaws, which regulate the Commission. In reviewing the bylaws, the Commission needs to update them a bit. She asked if there are any members who would be willing to form a subcommittee to look at the bylaws. The update of the HDC application and the bylaws need to go hand in hand.

Lydia Tilsley, Karen Stewart, and David Choate agreed to look at the bylaws to see if they need to be updated.

VII. Review of Monuments

Chair Coffey reported that at the recent select board meeting, the Selectmen voted to approve the acceptance of the two monuments as gifts to the Town; Rye 400 Monument, and Founding Families Monument. There was a piece of land that was identified, which is in front of the evergreen tree on Walker Lane, as a temporary home for both monuments. She continued that the Rye 400 Committee contacted her this week and confirmed that they have set aside \$2,500 for moving the monument in the future, if needed. She pointed out there are a lot of moving parts with the TAP Grant and the Town Center Committee exploring options; however, neither group wanted to have a time constraint on moving the monuments to a permanent home. She doesn't think it would be possible to have a timeline, as there are so many moving parts with construction. The HDC has been asked to give final approval for that location. She would like thoughts from the members about the location. The monuments are proposed to be side by side on the parcel. Chair Coffey noted that after the select board meeting, the HDC was informed that because these two monuments were accepted as gifts by the Town, it falls under government use, and is not subject to zoning laws. There is no concern on the size of the monuments because they are both town owned. She pointed out that both the land and the monuments are town owned.

There was some discussion about the proposed temporary location. Some members expressed a concern that funds to move the monuments in the future would not be available for the founder's

monument. It was noted by Selectman McGrath that Mr. Pearson, who has donated the monument to the Town, has verbally agreed to make arrangements to move the monument to its permanent home in the future. Selectman McGrath commented this is being considered a temporary location, but it may be permanent if the location fits in with the future plans and design for the Town Center.

Motion by David Choate to support the decision of the Select Board, in terms of the placement of the monuments, with the hope that another location will be considered in the future. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley.

**Vote: David Choate – Aye; James Tegeder – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye; Bob McGrath – Aye; Stacey Smith – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye
All in favor.**

VIII. 11 Old Parish Road – non-conforming vinyl fence

Chair Coffey noted that the owners of 11 Old Parish Road had vinyl fence installed, which replaced a chain-link fence. A building permit wasn't pulled for the work. The next steps would be for the HDC to submit a complaint to the Building Department that would be investigated. She pointed out the issue is that the neighbors have the same fence and nothing was said to them. Chair Coffey commented that she's surprised that the HDC didn't put up more of a fight when the neighbors' fence was put up because this is the heart of the Town Center. Chair Coffey noted that it's tricky with this particular property because the side yard is the fence of the Public Safety Building. The homeowners bought the same fence to try to match the fence that is already on one side of their land. Also, the property is not technically visible from Washington Road.

Chair Coffey noted that this past fall, the Junior High replaced their sign and they did not pull a permit. She pointed out that the Town is not subject to the ordinance; however, it would have been nice to have a courtesy review. She doesn't want HDC's integrity and authority to slip away.

Member Choate suggested putting something in the ordinance addressing courtesy review. The Commission agreed.

There was discussion in regard to the Building Department's responsibility in following through with violations found in the Historic District. It was noted by Member Tilsley that if the property owners pulled a permit, HDC would have been involved. It was agreed that Chair Coffey should reach out to the Town Administrator to let him know that a building permit wasn't pulled and let the Building Department follow up with the homeowner. She will ask that the HDC be kept informed. At this time, the HDC is comfortable with finding out what the Town's process is when a building permit is not pulled and seeking guidance from the Town Administrator.

IX. 500 Washington punch list review

Chair Coffey suggested that the HDC spend some time looking over the list, so that everyone is on the same page. She also suggested that the HDC formally present their findings to the Select Board.

Selectman McGrath asked the Commission to first review the document sent by the Town Administrator. The document was in response to each item, and when the work can be done.

After discussion, it was agreed to add the punch list to the January meeting agenda for discussion. The HDC will then meet with the Select Board to present the list.

Member Choate noted for the record, in 2024, the Heritage Commission is going to spearhead the effort to try and get the Town Hall renovated and restored.

X. Other Business

None

Adjournment

Motion by Karen Stewart to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F Ledger