

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2013

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, January 3, 2013, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chair Phil Donovan, Members Dr. Bryant Tolles, Marilyn Fraser, Carol Durgy Brooks, Robert V. Johnson II, and Frederick Richards. Administrative Specialist Donna Muir was also present.

2. Minutes of the December 6, 2012 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the December 6, 2012, Heritage Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Fraser to accept the minutes as written, and seconded by Dr. Tolles. Motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business:

a) Annual Election of Officers

The Chair turned the meeting over to Ms. Muir to proceed with the nominations for the Chair of the Heritage Commission. Ms. Muir opened the floor to receive nominations for Chair. Ms. Brooks nominated Phil Donovan for another term as Chair, and Mr. Richards seconded the nomination. As there were no further nominations, Ms. Muir closed the nominations and the Heritage Commission members voted unanimously for Mr. Donovan to continue to serve as Chair of the Heritage Commission. Ms. Muir then turned the meeting back over to Mr. Donovan.

The Chair opened the floor the floor to receive nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Fraser nominated Fred Richards for another term as Vice Chair and Ms. Brooks seconded the nomination. As there were no further nominations, the Chair closed the nominations and the Heritage Commission members voted unanimously for Mr. Richards to continue to serve as Vice Chair of the Heritage Commission.

b) Sewalls Falls Bridge Rehabilitation Reports

Ed Roberge, the City Engineer, provided the Heritage Commission with an update of the Sewalls Falls Bridge Rehabilitation project. Mr. Roberge stated that in September 2012, the City Council requested that project team reevaluate the various options available for the Sewalls Falls Bridge project. He said that a new meeting with the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) was held in October and the NHDHR suggested that the project team bring on a bridge historian to help figure out what the impacts to the historical significance of the bridge would be for each alternative. Mr. Roberge reviewed the significant portions of the bridge historian's report. He discussed the needs of the City, both long- and short-term, as

well as the three alternatives the project team felt were most appropriate. According to Mr. Roberge, the three alternatives are to build a new two-lane bridge upstream of the existing structure with the existing bridge either being retained for pedestrian or recreational use or abandoned in place as a static structure; to construct a new two-lane steel bridge along the existing alignment replacing the existing structure; or to rehabilitate the existing bridge to carry one lane of northbound traffic and construct a new single-lane steel beam bridge upstream of the existing bridge to carry a single lane of southbound traffic. Mr. Roberge reviewed the pros and cons of each of the alternatives, including the impacts to the right-of-way, to the environment, and to the cultural resources.

The Heritage Commission discussed the three alternatives, suggested mitigation options, and other possible alternatives. The Chair asked what NHDHR's response was to the alternatives. Mr. Roberge responded that they are concerned about the loss of a historic structure, but understands that the City has done due diligence in looking at all alternatives. Mr. Richards asked what Mr. Roberge felt was the best option. Mr. Roberge responded that the online replacement of the bridge provided the safest and most structurally sound option. The Chair stated that if a new two-lane bridge was built upstream of the existing structure, keeping the existing structure in place, it would become an eyesore, and he would recommend removal of the existing bridge and replacing it with a landmark bridge. Dr. Tolles asked whether bicycle traffic was taken into consideration. Mr. Roberge responded that the bridge would be multi-modal.

Mitigation options were discussed by the Heritage Commission. It was suggested that a plaque with pictures of the old bridge as well as a sculpture or fishing pier using pieces of the existing bridge be placed in the Fish and Game recreational property. Another suggestion was to utilize the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation in a way that would benefit others, such as part of a class for engineers. Incorporating the portal design of the existing structure on the new bridge was another option that was presented by the Heritage Commission.

Mr. Roberge asked whether the Heritage Commission would vote on one of the alternatives so as to move the project forward. The Chair stated that it would be difficult to take a vote, but would like that the comments, ideas, and suggestions made by the Heritage Commission be taken into consideration and conveyed to the City Council. Mr. Roberge responded that he would convey the Heritage Commission's thoughts to the City Council, but feels it is important that members of the Heritage Commission testify at the City Council meeting. Mr. Johnson stated that he is having second thoughts about removing the old bridge.

c) Preservation Easements on Elementary Schools owned by the Concord School District

The Chair reviewed an email received from Jack Dunn from the Concord School District regarding property restriction language that is included in the Purchase and Sales Agreement between the Concord School District and Carlisle Capital. Ms. Brooks suggested that this language be made part of the deed. The Chair suggested that Ms. McPherson, City Planner, speak with Mr. Dunn to see if this language could be added to the deed.

d) Update Granite Market Inventory Project

The Chair explained that Ms. McPherson set up an inventory spread sheet of Concord's granite markers. The Commission discussed the various markers and decided that the marker listed at the intersection of Fisherville Road and Sewalls Falls Road be removed from the spreadsheet, as it is not a historic marker but simply the name of the cemetery. It was noted that another marker, located on East Side Drive at the entrance to I-393, commemorating the first church service in Concord, should be added to the spreadsheet.

The Chair suggested that Commission members continue to submit additional information on any granite markers to Ms. McPherson.

e) Review of Master Plan Goals

The Chair stated that this item would be moved to next month's agenda, and asked that the Commission members review the section of the Master Plan 2030 regarding Historic Resources in order to be ready to discuss the goals at the February meeting.

4. Regular Business:

a) Downtown Complete Street Project – Progress / Comments

The Chair stated that there were no progress updates available.

b) Demolition Review – Committee Report

Mr. Richards reported that there have not been any applications to review.

c) Heritage Sign Program

Ms. Brooks reported that no new sign applications were received.

d) Establishment of a work group to compile and evaluate grant funding sources

The Chair reported that this work group consists of Mr. Shurtleff, Mr. Richards, Ms. Fraser, and himself. He stated that due to the holidays, the group has not met yet.

5. Informational Items:

a) Joint Heritage Commission and Architectural Design Review Committee Meeting

Ms. Muir reminded the Commission that a joint meeting of the Heritage Commission and the Architectural Design Review Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 8th, at 9:30 a.m., to discuss reuse of the Walker School building.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Ms. Brooks and seconded by Dr. Tolles to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist