

HERITAGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Heritage Commission was held on February 4, 2021, via Zoom, at 4:36 p.m.

Attendees: Chair Richard Jaques, Vice-Chair Jim Spain, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Members Carol Durgy Brooks, and Alternate Mike Dunn. Bob Johnson and Dr. Bryant Tolles Jr. arrived within the first 15 minutes of the meeting.

Absent: Planning Board Chairman Rich Woodfin

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Jaques at 4:36 p.m. at which time Mr. Jaques read the following statement:

As Chair of the Concord NH Heritage Commission, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Commission is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, we have provided public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, and instructions are provided on the City of Concord's website at: www.concordnh.gov/planning

With Regard to providing public access to the meeting;

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through visiting the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/181542776>.

If you do not have website access, you may dial the following phone number 929-205-6099 and enter the webinar id 181 54 2776.

For those calling in who want to provide public testimony, *via* the website, you may click on the chat icon to ask, or click "raise hand" to be recognized as authorized by the Chair. For participants, dialing in on a phone, you may dial *9 to alert the Chair that you want to testify. Please note that testimony only applies to public hearings, and public participation may not be authorized in a public meeting which is not a public hearing.

With Regard to providing the public with a way to alert us about access problems;

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-225-8515 or send an email to: planning@concordnh.gov.

With Regard to adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting;

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

With that, let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

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1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates

Mr. Spain made a motion to seat Alternate Member Dunn to the Commission for this meeting. Seconded by Councilor Kretovic.

With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously, as follows:

Mr. Jaques – in favor
Mr. Spain – in favor
Councilor Kretovic – in favor
Ms. Brooks – in favor

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes of January 7, 2021, as written. Seconded by Mr. Spain. By a roll call vote, the motion passed, as follows:

Mr. Jaques – in favor
Mr. Spain – in favor
Councilor Kretovic – in favor
Ms. Brooks – in favor
Mr. Dunn – in favor

Robert Johnson arrived at 4:41 p.m.

3. New Business

a. Interpretive Panel Installation

Ms. Shank provided an overview of emails she has received relative to the panel. She stated that David Cedarholm has been working on moving one of the benches from the park area altogether. Mr. Cedarholm is also looking into having the existing spruce tree trimmed, which could help with visibility. She explained that Mr. Cedarholm confirmed that there is no funding left to incur costs to relocate the panel.

Ms. Brooks had previously provided a written report to the Commission of her site visit with an assortment of pictures from different areas of the site that show different views of the panel. She noted that the placement is not consistent with what the Commission had discussed with the designer and engineer during several of the Commission's meetings. She stated that the text in the sign directs the viewer to look over the sign to the former location of the railroad station; the sign now faces a parking garage, in the wrong direction.

Ms. Brooks suggested moving the panel to the front of an existing shrub (about 20-30- feet from the Pleasant Street Intersection where the park sidewalk enters the park; about 20 feet from the building on Pleasant Street Extension) at a higher elevation from Storrs Street and slant the panel (as the Merrimack County Courthouse sign is slanted) so the reader can read the text and look up and over the slanted sign to the former location of the depot. She added that the posts should be painted black, as done with the Courthouse sign. Prior Commission meetings with the designer and engineer discussed the directive sign text, slanted sign orientation and sign location or placement to allow the reader to view the former railroad depot in the parking area across Storrs Street. Note that not all HC meeting minutes are online; there are gaps in the online records.

Bryant Tolles arrived at 4:46 p.m.

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Mr. Jaques stated that he too recalls the panel was to be at a slant and it was to face the former location of the railroad station. He stated that he envisioned the sign being smaller. He added that he does appreciate the current location due to the fact that the intended location may have been a safety factor with blocking views of drivers at the intersection due to the size. He reiterated that there is however, no funding available to relocate the sign.

Councilor Kretovic stated that she recalls discussions during the last Heritage meeting that Mr. Cedarholm attended relative to the panel placement, he mentioned the conflict with the traffic box at the corner and the underground conduit, which is why the panel was not able to be placed in the original location. She explained that City Council allocated funds for the project, which was funded from mitigation from the Sewalls Falls Bridge replacement project. Everything was approved by City Council. She explained that Council approved the location, and that nothing was indicated by any member of the public that the location was not acceptable. She stated that she is not sure that getting the panel relocated is possible; there may be nothing that can be done as there is no funding available. She noted that the cost would be between \$3,500-\$5,000.

Ms. Brooks stated that she was not aware that the item went to Council for approval. She added that the Commission would have clarified a more specific location.

Mr. Jaques thanked Ms. Brooks for her time and for the review.

b. Election of Demolition Review Committee Officers

Mr. Johnson made a motion nominating Mr. Spain as Chair of the Demolition Review Committee through December 2021, seconded by Ms. Brooks. With no other nominations, and by a roll call vote, the motion passed, as follows:

Mr. Jaques – in favor
Councilor Kretovic – in favor
Ms. Brooks – in favor
Mr. Tolles – in favor
Mr. Johnson – in favor
Mr. Dunn – in favor
Mr. Spain – abstained

Mr. Spain made a motion nominating Mr. Jaques for Vice-Chair of the Demolition Review Committee through December 2021, seconded by Councilor Kretovic. With no other nominations, and by a roll call vote, the motion passed, as follows:

Mr. Spain – in favor
Councilor Kretovic – in favor
Ms. Brooks – in favor
Mr. Tolles – in favor
Mr. Johnson – in favor
Mr. Dunn – in favor
Mr. Jaques – abstained

4. Demolition Review Committee – Jim Spain

Mr. Spain stated that there was one new application submitted to the Demolition Review Committee for January; a property on Hope Avenue. Members of the Committee viewed the property independently. Three members found the property to not be of any historic significance; however, one member did not concur. The conclusion of the Demolition Review Committee was that the Hope Avenue property is not historically significant. The permit was signed off.

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5. Heritage Sign Program – Carol Brooks

Ms. Brooks stated that no new applications have been submitted and there have been no new inquiries.

6. Planning Board Update – Rich Woodfin

Mr. Woodfin was not present. Ms. Shank stated that there was no new information to report.

7. Council Update – Councilor Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic shared an update regarding the Gas Holder vestibule noting that an anonymous donation has been received for \$500,000. This money will be a catalyst for future fundraising actions.

Councilor Kretovic stated that the Ad hoc Committee will be reconvening to determine the best way to work with Liberty Utilities to save and restore the building. She explained options that have been discussed thus far include restoring and sealing the building to retain it as a monument; renovating the structure and reuse, as well as some consideration to redevelop the entire area to create a gateway. There have been no efforts made to remove the structure, only to save it. She continued to describe the condition of the building noting the risks to the entire property mainly due to the weight of the slate roof.

Ms. Brooks stated that the Heritage Commission helped to spearhead and promote that the Gasholder be added to the National Register. A discussion was held regarding the Commission sending a letter to the editor with regards to its historic importance and urging the community to support saving it. Members agreed. Councilor Kretovic was not opposed to writing this letter; however, wanted to make sure that there is no conflict with her role on the Ad hoc Committee.

8. Old Business

- ***Abbott Village - Heather Shank***

Councilor Kretovic stated that the renovations to the inside of the Abbott House are ongoing; it is an active process.

Ms. Shank stated that the developer is planning to come back to the Planning Board for more building permits but wants to show meaningful progress on the house first.

- ***Demolition Delay Ordinance - Jim Spain***

A discussion was held regarding the process of the revisions. The subcommittee does not have a final draft. There is still work that needs to be done on the language and determining how some elements work.

Mr. Johnson asked about the process to get the ordinance approved and what role the Ad hoc Committee would play. Councilor Kretovic explained that the City Solicitor reviews all proposals and a report will be sent to Council. Mr. Jaques stated that the Ad hoc Committee has not met for the past five to six months, and the demo review ordinance has never been addressed in those meetings. He noted that the purpose of the committee is for members of various City groups to discuss how to educate people on preservation and promoting historic Concord.

Mr. Johnson questioned whether the Ad hoc Committee would support the Heritage Commission's proposed changes or recommend leaving the ordinance as is. He stated that he is in favor of the Ad hoc Committee and supports it; however, he wants to know whether there is support from the Ad hoc Committee on the changes. Councilor Kretovic stated that the Heritage Commission can send the revisions to the Ad hoc for review. The Commission can also invite the

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Ad hoc Committee to an upcoming meeting to discuss it. She noted that this may be outside their purview, as the scope of their purpose was determined by the Mayor.

- ***Historic Photo Repository - Rich Woodfin***

Mr. Woodfin was not present.

- ***Monuments & Granite Markers - Jim Spain***

Mr. Spain stated that he has received a few calls about markers and monuments as a result of the article in the City Manager's Newsletter on Facebook. He added that he was contacted by someone from the Concord Monitor to write a story about the Commission's ongoing search for monuments.

Councilor Kretovic stated that she received an email about the condition of the sign at the trolley stop at White Park. The sign needs to be rebuilt. The matter will be coming before City Council in the future.

9. Any other business to come before the Commission

a. Correspondence – NHDOT Meeting – February 11.

b. Attendance - Next meeting is March 4, 2021.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Brooks motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Spain seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:45 p.m. by a roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist