

FREEDOM HERITAGE COMMISSION

Minutes – Final

July 25, 2024

Present: Brandy Buttrick (Vice-Chair), Karrie Buttrick (Secretary), Mark McKinley (M), Alan Fall (BOS Rep). A quorum was established. Brandy introduced Jason Earle who is a Preservation Construction Consultant and is working with the Heritage Commission on the proposed LCHIP preservation planning grant. Five members of the public were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm at the Town Hall. The minutes of June 13, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Alan made a motion to accept the minutes, and it was seconded by Mark. All were in favor.

Agenda:

Update on the Town Offices Renovation Project and Masonic Hall Remediation:

Brandy informed those at the meeting that at the Select Board Meeting on July 15, 2024; Placework was selected by the Selectmen as the architectural firm for the Town Offices Renovation Project and Masonic Hall Remediation. Brandy asked Alan if he could discuss the process so that everyone has a better understanding. Alan explained that the professional selection process was followed. The Selectmen have selected Placework for the project and a contract is currently being worked out. Placework has presented a proposed project timeline, and the project has evolved. Since there will be a cost to move the staff during the Town Offices renovation, the possible use of the Masonic Hall as the location for temporary offices is being considered as Phase One under the proposed project timeline. A look at possible remediation work on the Masonic Hall is being considered in lieu of the plan for renting office trailers or renting space at another location as temporary office space. If remediation work could be justified on the Masonic Hall, then it would be an investment in Town owned property. Alan expressed his concern that it probably was not realistic to think that the Selectboard could have the plans, specification and actual costs ready for a warrant article for next Town's Meeting in March 2025. Having said that, Alan explains that the first phase would be to look at the Masonic Hall remediation, get some costs and designs, if it is possible, and put this information out in a warrant article. The focus of this project continues to be for the Town Office building renovation.

Update on the LCHIP Process:

With regards to the pending LCHIP preservation planning grant, Brandy asked Jason if he could explain the difference between a Historic Structure Report (HSR) and a Historic Building Assessment (HBA). Jason explains that both reports are done by a historic preservation specialist. The Historic Building Assessment (HBA) report is the least detailed of the two reports. It is more specific to the historical aspects of a building and would be used for the state registry or to the possibility of obtaining a Moose Plate grant. The Historic Structure Report (HSR) is more detailed and is done hand-in-hand with the architect allowing a historical value to the plan.

Karrie reminded the members that in May when Jason, Alan and members of the Heritage Commission with Andrew Cushing from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, Andrew suggested that a LCHIP Preservation Planning Grant application for both the Town Office building and the Masonic Hall be submitted. If the intent was to apply for LCHIP preservation grant money over the amount of \$50,000 in the future, a Historic Structure Report (HSR) would be needed as part of the documentation done on the buildings.

Karrie gave the following updates on the LCHIP process:

- On June 19, 2024, the Heritage Commission on behalf of the Town applied for a Preservation Planning Grant with an LCHIP Grant request in the amount of \$25,000.
- The funding request was to help cover the cost for a preservation plan and structural report for both buildings.
- On June 26, 2024, LCHIP notified the Heritage Commission that they had completed a technical review of our application. However, they asked that we submit a more accurate estimate of eligible expenses, with documentation and information on our LCHIP project team. This missing information is required by the end of September.
- The Heritage Commission is expecting a site visit from the LCHIP in the near future.

Alan confirmed that Placework after his discussion for “one-stop shopping”, that they would coordinate to have a historic preservationist as part of their team and would deal directly with them on the project.

Jason confirmed that Andrew Cushing has spoken to Alyssa with Placework to ensure that they understand that a Historic Structure Report (HSR) will be needed as part of the project.

Mark asked if Placework was going to do a new engineering study on the Masonic building. Alan replied that yes, Placework has a structural engineer who specializes in timber framing. Mark also asked if Placework would be using any of the information from Bergeron’s reports. Alan said that Placework has been given all of Bergeron’s reports and Horizon’s report. It is unclear at this time if any of that information would be used.

The Commission and Jason discussed the Placework Proposed Project Timeline worksheet with the understanding that this is a document that will be constantly updated as the project progresses. Alan said that he would get back to Alyssa with Placework to set up a date and time when those involved on the LCHIP Project Team could meet to get the remaining information for the pending 2024 LCHIP Preservation Planning Grant.

Update on Snow Roller

Brandy said in an effort to reinvigorate the snow roller project, he has asked to be put on the next Selectmen Meeting agenda. Brandy plans to discuss the condition the inside of the roller shed and what needs to be done so that the renovation work on the snow roller could begin inside the Roller Shed. Brandy has asked Scott Brooks for an estimate for leveling the shed floor with stone and a layer of stone dust.

Brandy reports that the Historical Society has a vested interest in the snow roller. The Cunningham family has asked that donations be made to the Freedom Historical Society towards the snow roller renovation in Scott’s name.

Brandy stated that the snow roller slats that are curing on the Cunningham property on Watson Hill need to be moved down to the roller shed. Alan stated that he needs to check with Jason Ferry on the cutting of the snow roller frame, and once it is cut, Alan would like to see that wood frame cured over the winter in the roller shed.

With the help of volunteers, the next steps are to cut the old slats cut off the snow roller, cut the bolts off and get the axle separated from the wheels.

Mark asked if once the snow roller is restored, could the roller be displayed outside for people to see. Alan said he would be concerned about the effect the weather might have on the snow roller.

Discuss recruiting new members:

Brandy explained that in accordance with Commission's operating procedures, the Commission should have 6 appointed members (plus a BOS Representative) and 5 alternates. We currently have 3 appointed members, a BOS Rep and 0 alternates. With Scott's passing and with Sue not being reappointed, a quorum of 4 members needed to conduct business is of great concern. It was suggested that a letter of recruitment be placed on the Town Bulletin Board website and on Town Posting Boards with the following:

- Include the Heritage Commission Mission Statement for the Town's website.
- Ask those interested to email the Heritage Commission at the Heritage Commission email address and a member of the commission will follow up with them.
- If the person is still interested, a letter would be submitted to the Selectmen for an appointment to the Commission.

Other Business:

With no other business, Brandy asked if there were any comments from the public.

Janice Zecher: At Town Meeting, was it asked to find out how much it would cost to renovate the Masonic Hall and to renovate the Town Office building? If they didn't ask for both, does that mean we would have to come back another year? Wasn't there a discussion on renting trailers as temporary offices?

Alan Fall: One question during the Town Meeting was what we would do with the staff during the renovation. There were no plans or costs associated with the proposed renovation plan. Les made the comment during the meeting that the Selectmen have a clear direction from the Town's people, that they want to keep the Town Offices up on Schoolhouse Hill. It was proposed to plan, specification and even bids for renovations on the Town Office Building and the cost associated with moving the staff to temporary office space for Town Meeting in 2025. The Selectmen have been discussing this and decided, lets invest in our buildings instead of throwing taxpayer money on rentals. If this works out and the town's people agree with it, this is what we will do.

Janice Zecher: So, what happens if we get back to the Town Meeting and the Town's people are saying that we asked you for the cost of renovating the Town Office Building and the cost of moving the staff, and we don't have those numbers. I would hate to see this project delayed another year.

Brandy Buttrick: Neither do we.

Jason Earle: Based on other projects that I have worked on; the education piece is very important. Between January when the grant might be awarded and the March Meeting, we need to be out there with a lot of explanations as to what is the plan, where we stand, and what we have done so far.

With no further business, Mark made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Alan.

The meeting ended at 6:56pm.