

**City of Keene
New Hampshire**

HERITAGE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 4:00 PM Keene Public Library, Trustees Room

Members Present:

Louise Zerba, Chair
Ardis Osborn, Alternate
Terry Clark, Councilor
Susan D'Egidio
Katherine Snow, Vice-Chair
John Bemis

Staff Present:

Karen Purinton, Planner

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

George Foskett
Rose Carey, Alternate

1) Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Zerba called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Roll call was conducted. As there were guests present for the presentation introductions were made all around. Guests included Hanspeter Weber (HDC), with Paul Henkle, Sally Miller, and Nancy Vincent from the Library.

Commission members agreed to hear the presentation before regular Commission business.

3) Presentation - Library Renovations – Jeff Hoover, of Tappe Associates

In 2002, the KPL Trustees and the Friends of the Keene Public Library purchased the adjacent building to the library known as the Masonic Temple and gave it to the city with the understanding that it would be an annex to the library and would be used for future library expansion. In 2006, a portion of the building was rented to Cheshire TV and the auditorium of the building, later known as Heberton Hall, was used for library and community programming. In 2012-13, the need for repairs to the building and further library expansion became evident.

An advisory committee of Library Trustees, Friends of the Keene Public Library and city representatives was formed known as **The Keene Library Annex Advisory Committee**. This committee moved forward with a presentation to the city, a community visioning process and the hiring of an architect to start the schematic design phase. This phase of the project would result in preliminary designs that would connect the main library to the annex and meet the library's needs for the future. Tappe Associates of Boston represented by Jeff Hoover was selected to do the Schematic Design. The firm has designed many libraries and is well known and respected for its expertise. The firm designed the library's last expansion in 1999.

This Schematic Design phase is nearing completion and the Keene Library Annex Advisory Committee recommended Jeff Hoover present the suggested designs to the Heritage Commission and the Historic District Commission for their comments and suggestions.

Jeff Hoover, the project architect gave a slide presentation depicting his work thus far. Mr. Hoover explained the proposed interior changes, uses, and renovations which will make the building very useful, accessible, and fire safety compliant. The fire escape will be replaced with something fully enclosed and more code compliant; the new elevator will be gurney size. Mr. Hoover noted the desire for the enclosure to be located in a place that has the least impact (visual) on the building. He pointed out the location on the plan (facing School Street). Addressing the connector, Mr. Hoover noted the ideas for this phase are still in development; he looks forward to coming back to articulate the linking (of the two buildings) piece. Addressing the West Street side of the connector, Mr. Hoover indicated the strategy doesn't include any ramps (noting the elevation from the street to the door). He does envision a sloped walkway with a drive-through for buses and greenspaces. He reiterated he is still experimenting with the design for the link between the two buildings. Mr. Hoover noted the connector does become the main entrance, so the Library will have two main entrances. He briefly addressed parking and presented suggestions for the backside of the connector.

Discussion:

Mr. Bemis suggested he would like to see Mr. Hoover re-address the safety issue of egress from the basement. Mr. Hoover indicated he would consider Mr. Bemis' recommendations. Mr. Hoover also noted he forgot to mention the stairs that come down from the top level which is being redone so that it will be another way out of the building; there will actually be three ways out.

Chair Zerba asked if the Heberton Hall door would remain. Mr. Hoover replied in the affirmative. Referring to the new enclosed egress, Chair Zerba asked if that would be brick matching the rest of the building. Mr. Hoover indicated it could be brick or a contrasting material; he continued for a piece of this size and significance we were thinking two tones brick. Mr. Hoover clarified for Chair Zerba that the diamond shaped areas on the enclosure are brick panels not windows; learning from the existing building. In response to Chair Zerba, Mr. Hoover agreed we do lose the kitchen door as it is now, but we still have access through the new door (explaining the path on the plans). Mr. Hoover also noted that Cheshire TV would be moving from the first floor.

Mr. Bemis noted his concerns with parking. Mr. Hoover explained the new stair enclosure doesn't take up any existing parking spaces. Mr. Hoover indicated a space or two may be lost with construction of the linking (connector) piece. Mr. Bemis recommended extending the parking from Winter Street to West Street. He also suggested having a historic room for displays such as those at City Hall. Mr. Bemis also pointed out the architect (Parker) for the Masonic Temple also designed City Hall.

Ms. Snow asked if the existing kitchen cabinets could be salvaged. Mr. Hoover explained the kitchen will be more of a catering kitchen, not a commercial kitchen indicating that salvaging the cabinets was a possibility they could consider. Mr. Hoover also indicated he sees no reason to sacrifice the high ceiling in the kitchen.

Mr. Hoover explained the main entrance accessibility in the connector, and the usefulness of the West Street side of the building for Ms. Osborne.

Ms. Purinton noted her pleasure with the bus bump-out; she also noted her concerns with parking. Ms. Purinton pointed out she only sees one handicapped parking space behind the

connector. Mr. Hoover indicated the two spaces could be left there until there are plans to put in something else. Ms. Purinton pointed out there is a bike rack currently in front of the Library. Mr. Hoover suggested they could find a place for a bike rack in front of the connector (West Street side). Mr. Hoover also explained the plans for the softscape on the front of the connector with hardscape on the backside.

Mr. Hoover clarified for Chair Zerba they are still melding all the ideas together for the design of the connector piece (different from the glassy box). He indicated he is hoping to show the basic design at the next presentation.

Ms. Purinton asked if any consideration had been given to the walkway having a green roof or to rain gardens. She advised Mr. Hoover these questions would be asked at the Planning Board. Mr. Hoover pointed out two areas where something of this nature could be considered. Ms. Purinton explained the approval process for Mr. Hoover; suggesting there could be joint sessions with the Planning Board and the Historic District Commission.

2) **Approval of Minutes** – January 14, 2015

Ms. Snow made a motion to approve the minutes of January 14, 2015 with the following changes/corrections: on Page 3 of 4, item 7 (e) second line change “Summer Night” to “Summer Knight”. Councilor Clark seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4) **Report of the Demolition Commission** – Nothing at this time.

5) **Report of the Community Outreach Commission** – Nothing to report at this time.

6) **Report of the Research Commission** –

a. South Main Street Historic District Update – Ms. Snow reported the Committee continues to work on the draft document. A tentative meeting date of May 5, 2015 has been set to obtain public input; the venue has not been determined. The draft document is available on the City website for review. Ms. Purinton reported she and Chair Carroll-Weldon are working on a summary statement of issues expressed by residents of the neighborhood that won't be remedied through a Historic District such as lighting and safety concerns. The next sub-committee meeting is April 2, 2015, at 4:30 PM.

b. Informational Packet – Ms. Purinton indicated the informational packet has turned into resources available on the website. She noted changes can be seen on the Heritage Commission webpage and the Preserving America webpage. There is a matching activity (carriage barns) at the end; hovering over the photo displays the answer. Councilor Clark indicated he had looked at the website and feels this item is now a website maintenance issue and can be removed from the agenda.

Ms. Snow suggested having a brochure stating why we think historic preservation is important with the web address included so that it can be handed to demolition applicants. Ms. Purinton suggested the existing brochure could be used as a template. She agreed to contact Beth Forcier for the original document file, and make the recommended changes/updates to present at the next meeting. Ms. Purinton also indicated she could work with Code Enforcement for distribution to those who request Demolition Permits. Mr. Bemis raised the issue of people who don't have

access to the internet. Ms. Purinton recommended adding a statement advising the information is available at the Planning Department.

- c. **Historical Plaques** – Nothing to report at this time. Remove from agenda.
- d. **Website Update**- Discussed under item (b).

7) **Staff Reports** –

1. Ms. Purinton reported the Historic District Commission will not meet this month as they have no applications coming before them. They did meet in February and approved an application for upgrades to the Stage Restaurant.
2. The Demolition Committee may see a Demolition Permit request for 17 Center Street (garage demolition).
3. There was an East Side Forum held in February with over 100 attendees. Good ideas were generated on how to use empty buildings on the east side of Keene. Ms. Purinton is still working on the summary report.

8) **New or Other Business** –

a. **Discussion:** Establishing 2015 Goals – Chair Zerba reviewed the goals listed in the previous meeting minutes. No additional goals were added.

1. Mr. Bemis reported the plans for the Masonic Temple are at City Hall.
2. Ms. Purinton reported work on the Stone Arch Bridge will be starting again soon. It is hoped the final paving (asphalt/gravel mix) will be completed by the end of April.

9) **Adjournment** – Chair Zerba adjourned the meeting at 5:16 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
March 13, 2015