



Heritage Commission

Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 4:00 PM

Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81211640566>

AGENDA

- This meeting will be conducted remotely.*
- The public may view/listen to the meeting by any of the following options:
 - Go to www.zoom.us/join and enter the Meeting ID: 812 1164 0566
 - (646) 558-8656 and enter the Meeting ID: 812 1164 0566
- *If you encounter any issues accessing this meeting, please call 603-209-4697 during the meeting.*

- I. **Call to Order – Roll Call**
- II. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – August 19, 2020, September 15, 2020, October 14, 2020 Meeting**
- III. **Election of Chair & Vice Chair**
- IV. **Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Project / Website**
- V. **Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Application**
- VI. **Membership Recruitment Video**
- VII. **Updates**
- VIII. **Next Meeting**
- IX. **Adjourn**

**In Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04, which declared a COVID-19 State of Emergency, the requirement that a quorum of a public body be physically present at the meeting location under RSA 91-A:2, III(b), and the requirement that each part of a meeting of a public body be audible or otherwise discernible to the public at the meeting location under RSA 91-A:2, III(c), have been waived. Public participation may be provided through telephonic and other electronic means.*

1 **City of Keene**
2 **New Hampshire**

3
4
5 **JOINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION & HERITAGE COMMISSION**
6 **MEETING MINUTES**
7

8 **Wednesday, August 19, 2020**

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Historic District Commission Members

Present:

Andrew Weglinski, Chair
Councilor Catherine Workman
Hope Benik
Tia Hockett, Alternate (Voting)

Heritage Commission Members Present:

Rose Carey, Chair
Councilor Gladys Johnsen
Susan DeGidio
Cauley Powell
Louise Zerba, Alternate (Voting)

Historic District Commission Members

Not Present:

Nancy Proctor
Sam Temple
Hans Porchitz
Hanspeter Weber, Alternate
Joslin Kimball Frank, Alternate
Dave Bergeron, Alternate
Peter Poanessa, Alternate

Heritage Commission Members Not

Present:

Charlotte Schuerman
Erin Benik
Kelly Ballard

Staff Present:

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner
Mari Brunner, Planner

9
10 **1) Call to Order and Roll Call**
11

12 Chair Weglinski called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM and read the executive order authorizing
13 a remote meeting: Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire
14 pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. Pursuant to this order the members present, all of whom
15 called alone, stated their locations. Chair Weglinski, Councilor Workman, Ms. Hockett, Chair
16 Carey, Ms. Powell, Councilor Johnsen, and Ms. Zerba called from their home addresses. Ms.
17 Benik called from 34 Court Street.

18
19 **2) NH Certified Local Government Program Discussion – Staff from the NH Division**
20 **of Historical Resources (NHDHR) will facilitate a discussion regarding the City’s**
21 **involvement in the Certified Local Government Program, which is a partnership**
22 **between municipal governments and the state historic preservation program to**
23 **encourage and expand local involvement in preservation-related activities.**
24

25 Ms. Kessler introduced Staff from the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR), Amy
26 Dixon (calling alone from Warner, NH) and Nadine Miller (calling alone from Nashua, NH),
27 who tour Certified Local Government Program communities every few years to check-in.
28

29 Ms. Miller explained that the Certified Local Government (CLG) program is a partnership
30 between the National Park Service, the NHDHR, and the 25 current local NH communities
31 participating, which must have a Historic District regulated locally. Keene has been a CLG
32 community for approximately 12 years and has done great work, particularly due to the joint
33 roles of the Historic District and Heritage Commissions fostering the CLG's responsibility to the
34 whole town, not just the Historic District. Ms. Miller said that the greatest benefit of the CLG
35 program is two-year grants awarded annually for various programming such as surveying
36 historic properties anywhere in town, master plan development, ordinance review, and education.
37 Ms. Miller said that the NHDHR promotes Keene to other CLG communities as an example of
38 popular community engagement to determine whether/how to expand their Historic District.
39 Every four years, NHDHR staff check-in with CLG communities and at this meeting, Ms. Miller
40 went through a series of questions for Staff and Commission members' reply.

41 1. How does the community enforce State and local legislation for the designation and
42 protection of historic properties?

43 Ms. Kessler confirmed that Keene follows the US Secretary of Interior standards for Historic
44 Preservation. Ms. Miller asked if there had been any controversial projects of note in the City for
45 discussion moving forward. Chair Weglinski noted the common Historic District Commission
46 theme of retroactive approvals – applicants doing work and asking forgiveness later – that the
47 Commission is trying to limit but must address case-by-case during public hearings. Ms. Brunner
48 added that in some instances, people were unaware they were in the Downtown Historic District
49 and therefore needed approval; however, there have also been instances where people who
50 should have known that they needed permission did not seek approval until the City asked them
51 to after-the-fact. Ms. Miller suggested a possible future CLG grant could be used for education
52 and promotion to Historic District residents.

53 2. Are Commission memberships adequate and qualified?

54 Ms. Kessler confirmed that the City requests resumes or background information and initial
55 interest letters for all Commission members, which are kept on file as a requirement for
56 nominating and appointing new members.

57 3. Do the Commissions meet at minimum four times annually?

58 Ms. Kessler confirmed that the Heritage Commission meets bi-monthly and the Historic District
59 Commission meets at minimum four times annually, and often more than four times (pending
60 applications). Commission meetings are currently proceeding virtually during the Covid-19 State
61 of Emergency.

62 4. Is there a system for survey and inventory of historic properties?

63 Ms. Kessler said the City is currently under contract with a historic preservation firm to conduct
64 a historic resource inventory of carriage houses, barns, and agricultural buildings near to the
65 City's downtown to understand what resources exist between Court and Washington Streets, to
66 identify properties most at risk of potential demolition, and to work with those property owners
67 by helping them to seek resources to preserve historic features. Chair Weglinski noted that a
68 carriage house on Main Street came to the Historic District Commission several times for
69 rehabilitation. He added that due to the Historic District expansion in 2011, a section of the
70 District remains unranked, and a subcommittee of these two Commissions formed but could not
71 continue work during the Covid-19 State of Emergency. Ms. Miller suggested such a ranking
72 effort could be a CLG grant opportunity, similar to CLG initiatives in Lebanon, Sanbornton, and
73 Amherst, the latter of which integrated GIS into their ranking for their website.

74 5. Does the community participate in the NHDHR's program to recommend buildings to the
75 National Register?

76 Ms. Kessler said that a local property owner chose to be on the State Register in 2019 and the
77 Heritage Commission was helpful in that process. Ms. Miller said that a CLG grant could fund
78 listing a property on the Register.

79 6. Are there public hearings and minutes for all Commission decisions and actions?

80 Ms. Kessler said that per the Right to Know Law (RSA 91-A), meeting agendas and minutes are
81 posted to the City website and elsewhere within the Law's terms. Ms. Miller asked about posting
82 historic resource inventories/surveys, etc. on the website. Ms. Kessler said that the City applied
83 unsuccessfully for a CLG grant in the last round to better consolidate that historical resource
84 survey information for the public, but there is insufficient Staff time for the effort despite seeing
85 the great advantage. Ms. Miller referenced an inventory database that can help in this effort
86 without having to visit the NHDHR office; Ms. Kessler and Chair Carey have access to the
87 database.

88 Having concluded the formal questionnaire, Ms. Miller noted that she reviews Federal and State
89 projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and she asks applicants in
90 the Keene Historic District to check-in with the Historic District Commission; she knew the
91 Commission was very responsive on cell tower projects. Ms. Miller asked how the Section 106
92 review process is working for the City. Ms. Kessler said that review is effective generally and if
93 an applicant does not come to the City directly, the NHDHR notifies the City of the application
94 and encourages the applicant to visit the Heritage Commission, which can provide feedback to
95 assist in State review. Chair Carey thought the Section 106 review process works well to allow
96 the City to work with applicants trying to modify historic areas; there have been several
97 instances in the last two years. Ms. Miller appreciated the comments and added that when an
98 application is in the Historic District, the NHDHR tries to condition their comments on following
99 local guidelines as well.

100 The conversation continued on cell towers and Ms. Miller said that the NHDHR sometimes
101 reviews those applications within the programmatic agreements that telecommunications
102 companies sign, which can sometimes limit the NHDHR review. Ms. Miller cited a project on

103 Water Street that NHDHR was not allowed to review. Ms. Kessler said the City was informed by
104 that applicant that they were exempt from Section 106 and the City informed Ms. Miller, who
105 said that if there were significant local concerns, the NHDHR could investigate further. Ms.
106 Brunner explained that Staff were concerned because under the City's Telecommunications
107 Ordinance, the proposal to expand that array would require a Conditional Use Permit but State
108 law preempted local authority. Staff was concerned because that array was placed on a historic
109 building outside the Historic District and prior to its establishment and creation of the local
110 Telecommunications Ordinance. The applicant subsequently reduced the array size but now
111 wants to increase it again and the proposal does not follow local regulations. Ms. Kessler said
112 that Staff ultimately felt it was impossible to require a review process due to State law and opted
113 to not seek NHDHR support to go directly to the FCC because the array was preempted at State
114 level. Ms. Miller cited another small cell collocation downtown and Ms. Kessler said that
115 applicant contacted the City and in consultation with Chair Carey, Staff determined that because
116 it was located on a State right-of-way farther from downtown and with no historic buildings in a
117 reasonable radius, the decision was to not bring it to the Heritage Commission. Ms. Miller said to
118 never hesitate contacting NHDHR for projects of concern.

119 Commissioners cited the following ideas with which NHDHR could potentially help the City:

- 120 ▪ Emerald Street resource inventory – part of the 2011 Historic District expansion. Ms.
121 Brunner will consult with Ms. Miller.
- 122 ▪ Stone Arch Bridge – final work pends a grant application that the City needs assistance
123 writing. Ms. Dixon would determine whether grant writing is an eligible expense.
124 Because the bridge is a part of the Transportation Heritage Trail, there could be other
125 types of funding available, such as for additional research on the bridge or rail line
126 because it was never formally evaluated historically, or for sign concepts and design
127 development (not installation). Ms. Miller said that NHDHR encourages NH Department
128 of Transportation to work with the City and to have confidence in the Heritage
129 Commissions ability to excel with that bridge. The Heritage Commission would discuss.
- 130 ▪ Heritage Commission grant application deferred to this fall – this is a major project for
131 the Commission to best digitize their resources for the public. Ms. Dixon would revisit
132 the original submission but thought funds ran out last time, agreed it was a worthwhile
133 effort, and said the City should contact NHDHR in the fall or closer to beginning of 2021
134 with an updated cost quote from the vendor.
- 135 ▪ Historic District Commission support – Ms. Miller and Ms. Dixon can help the Keene
136 Commission collaborate with other Historic District Commissions through the State.
137 Additionally, the NHDHR can provide resources to best support new Commission
138 members learning their roles; to begin, Commissioners can refer to the [National Alliance
139 of Preservation Commissions](#) website, including their CAMP program that the State has
140 been trying to replicate.

141

142 **3) Other Business**

143

144 Chair Carey welcomed Councilor Johnsen to the Heritage Commission and Ms. Kessler would
145 work with the Councilor via email on the Commission's history. There should be a

146 Commissioner on both the Heritage and Historic District Commissions, but is lacking at this
147 time.

148
149 The Commissions would like to hold joint meetings more often to check-in and collaborate,
150 perhaps annually. Ms. Kessler added that CLG grants are available annually, with the application
151 due in November, and so it might be good to have that annual joint meeting toward the end of
152 summer or early fall to determine if the Commissions want to apply for a collaborative grant.
153 The City can submit multiple applications at the same time, currently has one active grant for the
154 carriage barn project, and one application moving forward this fall for web developer support to
155 create a public database of historic property inventories. The downside of the grants is that only
156 research projects are funded 100% and other programs like education require a 40% community
157 match, which can include Staff and volunteer time.

158
159 Both Commissions would discuss at their next meetings ways to better collaborate and consider a
160 replacement liaison member for both Commissions. Carey would send status updates to Ms.
161 Brunner to determine when both sides want the next joint meeting.

162 **4) Adjourn**

163
164 There being no further business, Chair Weglinski adjourned the meeting at 5:59 PM.

165
166 Respectfully submitted by,
167 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
168 August 26, 2020

169
170 Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 HERITAGE COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

8 **Tuesday, September 15, 2020**

4:00 PM

Remotely via Zoom

Members Present:

Susan D'Egidio, Vice Chair
Rose Carey, Co-Chair
Charlotte Schuerman, Co-Chair
Cauley Powell
Gladys Johnsen, Councilor
Louise Zerba, Alternate

Staff Present:

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Kelly Ballard
Erin Benik

9
10 **1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

11
12 Roll call was conducted. Co-Chair Carey noted that Ms. Zerba is a voting member today.

13
14 Co-Chair Carey read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to
15 Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions
16 of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared
17 COVID-19 State of Emergency. She called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

18
19 **2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – March 11, 2020**

20
21 Co-Chair Schuerman made a motion to adopt the minutes of March 11, 2020. Ms. Zerba
22 seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

23
24 **3) Presentation on Transportation Heritage Trail**

25
26 Charles (Chuck) Redfern stated that he is with the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee
27 (BPPAC) and also the co-founder with John Summers of Pathways for Keene (PFK), which is
28 the fundraising arm for the rail trail system in Keene. PFK has been in existence since 1994.
29 The BPPAC was formed shortly after that to implement the City of Keene's Bicycle Master Plan.
30 The Cheshire Rail Trail is perhaps the most substantial of the trails in Keene, in that it takes up
31 the most amount of geography. The Ashuelot Rail Trail is shown on the map in grey. That is

32 much shorter in Keene than the actual Cheshire Rail Trail, which is shown in green, and the next
33 phase proposed is shown in yellow. They will talk about the latter today. It is an extension of
34 Eastern Ave to Rt. 101. There is a trailhead on Eastern Ave. for cars to park and unload bicycles
35 and go onto the trails. With that extension they are also looking at crossing the Stone Arch
36 Bridge (SAB), which is heavily used even though it is technically closed to the public. There
37 was even a wedding on the bridge last Saturday, and the wedding party arrived and departed by
38 bicycles. There are safety improvements that need to be made to the SAB.

39

40 He continued that then the Prouse Bridge would come next. The SAB is historically significant.
41 The city developed around the railroad. The Prouse Bridge is significant in the eyes of NH
42 Department of Transportation (NHDOT). It was the first bridge that used a certain type of steel
43 used to create the bridges on the US interstate system started by President Eisenhower. It was
44 also adopted for other highway uses. The Prouse Bridge had been in existence on I-93 in
45 Londonderry and has been purchased by the City of Keene for \$1 and is in a sandpit in
46 Londonderry for its eventual relocation to Keene. Hopefully they will be able to negotiate for
47 the NHDOT to pay the cost of transport. It would be nice for the NHDOT to support its own
48 history to do that. The bridge is broken up into pieces, showing exactly how to reassemble it so
49 it retains its historical significance. What will also be important with the SAB is the safety
50 improvements being proposed, along with the other stone cap box, is that it remain safe but also
51 that they do not lose the historical significance of the bridge.

52

53 He continued that the yellow portion of the map is the last phase from the green area to the City
54 line. Then the trail goes into Swanzey. The Town of Swanzey will be looking to make
55 improvements at about the same time as Keene. On the left side going up toward North Bridge
56 and Whitcomb Mill Rd, the trail will go much further.

57

58 Lynne Monroe stated that the company she works for (Preservation Company), as part of
59 preparing for the removal of the Prouse Bridge from its original location, is preparing an
60 interpretive sign to accompany it to Keene and its new location. Mr. Redfern asked when that is
61 happening. Ms. Monroe replied probably the spring. She continued that she would be interested
62 in talking with Mr. Redfern about the location they wish it to be installed in, at some point as
63 they move toward fabrication. Mr. Redfern replied that he may contact her later to talk.

64

65 Continuing his presentation, Mr. Redfern stated that the goal of PFK and the City's Master Plan
66 is to create over 20 miles of the rail trails. They want to improve them for use by runners,
67 walkers, and bicyclists. He continued that the trails are also used by people on inline skates and
68 now people using ADA-approved carts. The routes connect to places of work, schools,
69 shopping, and recreation. Also the trails increase safety for all pedestrians and bicyclists. PFK is
70 also here to help revitalize the downtown, which was important back in 1995 when there were a
71 lot of empty storefronts. They were trying to promote tourism and recreation for citizens and the
72 use of shops and restaurants, many of which are located within half a mile of the trail system,
73 which goes through the middle of the downtown.

74

75 He continued that the project serves a dual purpose: use by citizens and visitors. The Boston
76 Globe just named the Cheshire Rail Trail the 5th most friendly place to bike with families in New
77 England. The Transportation Heritage Trail will be the next phase of the ongoing development of
78 the existing Cheshire Rail Trail system. This section will begin at the terminus of the Keene
79 Industrial Heritage Trail.

80

81 Mr. Redfern continued that construction will be in three major segments: the extension of the
82 trail from Eastern Ave., the improvements of the SAB, and the installation of the Prouse Bridge.
83 For budget purposes it will be broken out into four components, possibly five. The State is doing
84 an economic impact study for the rail trails in the state. They have UNH and the Nelson
85 Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth involved, and hired GPI Consulting.

86

87 Mr. Redfern continued that he has three asks for this committee, and one is: he is asking for
88 letters of support as he goes about applying for grants. He will be asking for those to be signed
89 by the committee chairs. He can give a template of what he has used with others and the chairs
90 could customize it to meet the Heritage Commission's needs. There was a discussion of a
91 subcommittee during the Heritage Commission's meeting minutes of March 11. Those minutes
92 say that Co-Chair Carey attended the BPPAC meeting and the BPPAC was seeking two Heritage
93 Commission members to join BPPAC members in forming a subcommittee to do help do
94 historical research, public outreach, promotional work, and that type of activity. There are
95 administrative issues to consider with this, to follow the City's protocol for subcommittees (for
96 example, agendas and meeting minutes), but the protocol for subcommittees is not as extensive
97 as the protocol for formal committees. The subcommittee could meet every other month instead
98 of monthly. Then the Heritage Commission members on the subcommittee could report back to
99 the Heritage Commission about what is going on.

100

101 Mr. Redfern asked if there are questions. Ms. Kessler stated that Ms. Zerba is wondering if there
102 will be a bridge over Swanzev Factory Rd. Mr. Redfern replied that that is being discussed by
103 the City. He continued that at this point he is not aware of any plans of substance. They are
104 talking about possibly using the EJ Michael Blastos Bailey Bridge over the Ashuelot River as a
105 potential bridge. However, there may be another use for that bridge.

106

107 Ms. Monroe stated that (Preservation Company) is working on the Winchester Street
108 Reconstruction Project, of which the Baily Bridge is a component, and it would be great to have
109 his help. She continued that they will be writing the historical documentation for that area.

110

111 Mr. Redfern stated that the next slide is the potential for the budget, with costs for the four
112 phases. He continued that they have always worked building the trail systems with the help of
113 federal money. That federal money has been called different programs over the years as
114 administrations and Congress has changed, but basically it is Transportation Alternatives
115 funding, and Recreational Trails grants. They all come from the Federal Highway
116 Administration. Where they are getting the grant from will determine the size of the match.
117 There are two tables, one showing what the costs would be if it was 50% Federal funds, 25%

118 City funds, and 25% PFK funds; and one showing what the costs would be if it was 80% Federal
119 funds, 10% City funds, and 10% PFK funds. The Cheshire Rail Trail Extension will be crushed
120 stone dust. PFK has already paid for 100% of the preliminary design cost. The SAB safety
121 improvements would be \$123,000. The trailhead at the end of Eastern Ave would be \$30,475.
122 Some parts of the project are relatively cheap. The extension will require logging, survey work,
123 water work/drainage improvements, and so on and so forth.

124
125 Ms. Kessler stated that Mr. Redfern has a draft letter of support to share. She showed it on the
126 screen. Mr. Redfern stated that it is an example of what he would be seeking from the Heritage
127 Commission in the future. He has received letters of support so far from the BPPAC, Keene
128 Chamber of Commerce, and Cheshire Medical Center's public health group.

129
130 Mr. Redfern asked if Ms. Kessler can facilitate communication between the Heritage
131 Commission and the BPPAC to form this subcommittee and help him navigate whatever
132 administrative needs there might be, regarding the City's protocol. Ms. Kessler replied that she
133 might defer to Mr. Schoefmann to be the staff support for the subcommittee; she will talk with
134 him. Mr. Redfern stated that the draft minutes of the March 11 meeting said there was talk about
135 creating this subcommittee, particularly for the SAB improvements portion of the project. They
136 could start that subcommittee through Zoom, since COVID-19 will likely last through the spring.
137 He asked if anyone had questions.

138
139 Co-Chair Carey asked if he is looking for subcommittee members now. Mr. Redfern replied that
140 he would need them by a month from now. Co-Chair Carey asked if anyone who is present right
141 now would like to be a member. Ms. D'Egidio replied that she would be interested but is
142 hesitant due to COVID-19. She asked if they would be able to do the research online instead of
143 in person. Co-Chair Carey replied yes. Mr. Redfern replied that he compiled research on the
144 Prouse Bridge that he got from the NHDOT. He continued that the NHDOT was very helpful.
145 He thinks someone could get ahold of the material that was used to get the SAB designated as a
146 historical infrastructure. Co-Chair Carey replied yes, they could get into the details of that.

147
148 Ms. Powell stated that she will join the subcommittee as well. Ms. Kessler stated that she will
149 share the names with Mr. Schoefmann so she and he can start reaching out to people to set up a
150 subcommittee meeting.

151
152 Ms. Monroe stated that all the research on both the Prouse Bridge and SAB are enormous files at
153 the Division of Historical Research and that is available online for folks. Ms. Kessler replied
154 that the City has some of those files on its server, too, and has other tools to use to access that
155 research.

156
157 Co-Chair Carey asked if they should take a vote on the letter of support. Ms. Kessler offered
158 suggested wording for a motion.

159

160 Ms. Zerba made a motion to allow the Heritage Commission Chair to draft and sign a letter of
161 support for the Transportation Heritage Trail Project. Ms. D'Egidio seconded the motion, which
162 passed by unanimous vote.

163

164 Mr. Redfern asked that it be addressed "To Whom it May Concern" and be printed on letterhead.

165

166 **4) Overview of Urban Barn and Carriage House Inventory**

167

168 Ms. Kessler stated that three members are here from Preservation Company, the team that has
169 been hired to work on this project. She asked them to introduce themselves.

170

171 Lynne Monroe introduced herself, Reagan Baydoun Ruedig, and Laura Driemeyer. Ms. Monroe
172 stated that they are eager to get going with the field work before it gets too late in the year. She
173 continued that Ms. Kessler asked them to come today to talk with the Heritage Commission
174 about how the Heritage Commission might support their work.

175

176 Ms. Kessler stated that the City received a CLG grant to hire a consultant to conduct an urban
177 barn and carriage house inventory in the area between Court and Washington Streets. Soon after
178 hiring a consultant, COVID-19 occurred. They received an extension from the State and Federal
179 government for this project until September of next year. A lot of it is field work, and a
180 component is engaging the public. As a team they decided to postpone the original schedule, and
181 there is more work to do between the City and the team to determine the revised timeframe.

182 They are just starting to pick up work on the project. To briefly recap: they are inventorying an
183 area of the City to the north of Central Square between Court St. and Washington St. and just
184 south of North St. It is the triangle between Court and Washington Streets. They brought on a
185 historic resource consultant to help do inventories of those properties to better understand the
186 historic significance of barns and outbuildings and to help the City understand which properties
187 are most significant in those areas, and which are most at risk, and and give information they can
188 share with the property owners about the significance of the structures. They have seen a
189 number of barns and outbuildings be demolished over the years. Even though the City has a
190 Demolition Review Committee sometimes it is hard to know the significance of a building when
191 they only have a five day turnaround to make a determination of historical significance. Some of
192 them are not in great condition so it may seem easy to sign off on demolition. But if they have
193 this information it would help the Demolition Review Committee evaluate the significance of a
194 structure before signing off on whether it is clear that it can be demolished.

195

196 Ms. Kessler stated that the Heritage Commission's co-chairs asked for staff to bring the
197 consultants in to learn more about what the expectations would be of the Heritage Commission
198 in providing support and research to their team as they are going into this area and doing
199 inventorying. Today they can meet and discuss how the Heritage Commission can help and
200 discuss timeframes and expectations for how to work together.

201

202 Ms. Monroe stated that the Preservation Company is being asked by the Division of Historical
203 Resources to use the survey form that Concord used to conduct its urban barn survey. However,
204 they were under the impression when signing the contract with the City that the form to be used
205 was the Barn Form. The Concord survey form involves more work that was not anticipated in the
206 development of the budget for the project. She asked Ms. Driemeyer if there are parts of the
207 form the City could fill in, such as information from tax research. She is concerned because the
208 budget on this is exceedingly tight and they very much want to do it and they could give the City
209 so much information if they did not have to put it into this format. In terms of research, they
210 could use the support of the Commission to find historical photographs, and to research any
211 historical photos that has a carriage barn in it. Also, the Commission could support interaction
212 with the public on the project, such as mailing notices, contacting property owners, issuing press
213 releases, etc. Ms. Kessler noted that they will need property owners' permission to enter private
214 property and to take photographs.

215
216 Co-Chair Carey replied that the Heritage Commission is very happy to help with all of those
217 things that Ms. Monroe mentioned. She continued that these are things the Heritage Commission
218 had talked about as being in the scope of the grant, and they are ways that they could support the
219 work. Ms. Monroe thanked her.

220
221 Ms. Ruedig stated that Ms. Kessler has given them information from the Assessor's database, so
222 that helps them begin to compile a list of every property that has a carriage barn. She continued
223 that this data has to be refined some, since some of those buildings are just garages. They have
224 to go through and really make a complete list of all the properties they will be making a survey
225 form for. That will be double-checked when they are out in the field, to make sure something
226 qualifies as a carriage barn. Ms. Monroe stated that in the best possible world they would be
227 surveying every garage, barn, and shed on the property, but this project started out as "carriage
228 barns." Ms. Ruedig noted that the list Ms. Kessler sent her has every building that the Assessor
229 sees, whether garage, shed, barn, and so on and so forth. She has been flagging and taking out
230 sheds and garages. They need to figure out the line. Ms. Kessler stated that the reason the
231 Assessor database is that way is because there could be a carriage barn called a "garage," since
232 the Assessor is not applying a historical lens to how they assess properties. It is a starting place
233 and she can work with Ms. Ruedig to drill down into this database.

234
235 Ms. Ruedig stated that as she looks at other maps and sources, she sees there are also attached
236 carriage barns that did not make the Assessor's list. Hopefully soon, they will give the Heritage
237 Commission an actual list of the properties they are looking at, so they can help the Heritage
238 Commission narrow down what historic photographs they are looking for, and maybe some basic
239 history/information about the well-known buildings, that the Heritage Commission can give
240 them. Co-Chair Carey replied that that sounds great, and when the list comes through, Heritage
241 Commission members can do some "windshield surveys" to see if the buildings are actually
242 worthy of the work.

243

244 Ms. Monroe stated that she is worried about the numbers. Ms. Ruedig stated that the numbers
245 are still to be determined. They had originally estimated about 65. Ms. Kessler replied that the
246 original grant application said 60. She continued that as Ms. Monroe was saying earlier, they
247 assumed that they were using one form and then after they received the grant they learned that
248 there is a totally different form that the consultants would have to use, that brings in much more
249 detail than was anticipated. It affects the budget and time, so the number may have to go down.
250 Ms. Monroe stated that maybe they could work with the Division of Historical Resources (DHR)
251 about which fields of the form need to be filled out. It is worth conversation. Ms. Kessler
252 replied yes, they can do that. She continued that once they have a sense of the number/starting
253 place, the City can inquire with DHR. She is happy to work with Ms. Ruedig regarding the
254 Assessor's data. And the Assessor can be pulled in, too, if needed, if there are questions.
255

256 Ms. Zerba asked if the Heritage Commission will be walking the neighborhoods. Co-Chair
257 Carey replied that walking would not be necessary; they can drive. Ms. Monroe replied that she
258 needs to walk and be on the properties. Ms. Carey replied yes, and the Heritage Commission can
259 help with that, by getting the word out via press or letters, when Ms. Monroe knows when she
260 will be doing that. Ms. Monroe replied that it should be soon, because the weather is getting
261 cold. Ms. Kessler stated that they will need to get direct permission from the property owners, if
262 Ms. Monroe is going to walk on their properties. Ms. Monroe replied that she can try to do it
263 from the right-of-way but the survey involves buildings on the back of the properties. Ms.
264 Monroe stated that spring survey work is much better. Co-Chair Carey asked if they want to
265 work the list and then do the survey work in the spring. Ms. Kessler replied that that would give
266 them time to send direct letters to the property owners to let them know that this project is
267 happening. Ms. Monroe stated that the letters could tell the property owners the day and
268 timeframe to expect her. Ms. Kessler replied that they will have to work the details out. But if
269 they shift to spring it will give everyone more time to prepare and also let the neighborhoods
270 know that this will be happening. She foresees that the City would send letters directly to all the
271 property owners that will be part of the survey, letting them know that the City may be reaching
272 out to them again to seek permission for access to their property and being really clear about
273 what would happen. They will have to come up with a way to confirm that access has been
274 granted. The City and Commission will work with the three consultants, and do their due
275 diligence in working with the property owners to help get the needed access.
276

277 Co-Chair Carey asked what else the three of them would like help with. She continued that the
278 Commission can do research, and photos, and they will put this public outreach on the back
279 burner until spring and when they have that list. Ms. Monroe stated that they will not be doing a
280 full-fledged inventory form on every one of these properties. It is a huge amount and they do not
281 have the budget for it. As much as they would like to, it is just not possible. Co-Chair Carey
282 stated that they can use the next few months to work together on what is going to be researched
283 and how. Ms. Driemeyer and Ms. Monroe showed the Heritage Commission a slide of an
284 example barn survey form that they used in Concord and all of the information it contains,
285 compared to the form the DHR is requiring them to use for the Keene project. Ms. Kessler stated
286 that the work that the three of them do will be focused on the carriage houses – describing the

287 architectural features and history. Ms. Monroe replied yes, they want to give the City a really
288 good understanding of how carriage barns were used in Keene and in general and the importance
289 of them. Ms. Driemeyer stated that a context document accompanies the survey form,
290 addressing those points, so they understand the evolution of carriage barns, urban barns, and
291 carriage houses, in the context of Keene. Ms. Monroe replied that that is what Ms. Driemeyer
292 will be writing and that is the exciting part of the survey. Ms. Kessler stated that the form that
293 the DHR has provided for the project brings in more information about the main building, not
294 just the carriage barn, and that is what Ms. Monroe, Ms. Driemeyer, and Ms. Ruedig are looking
295 for support with – understanding the other aspects of the property, since originally it was
296 proposed that they just be focusing on the carriage barns, not the main building or property. Ms.
297 Monroe agreed. Ms. Kessler stated that she wants it to be clear for the Commission that there is
298 a distinction between what the City contracted with the consultant for and what the DHR is
299 asking for. That is why the consultants are looking for more volunteer support from the
300 Commission, because it goes beyond the scope that the consultants signed onto, and that the City
301 sought. Ms. Monroe agreed. Co-Chair Carey replied that the Commission appreciates that, and
302 they will help the consultants and support this project however they can. Ms. Kessler stated that
303 she will follow-up with the consultants on what the next steps are, and in finalizing that list of
304 properties so the Heritage Commission can look at that and have time to do that research
305 collection.

306
307 Councilor Johnsen stated that can go to the City Attorney and make sure they are doing it right,
308 so they can take pictures. She continued that she is sure he would be able to handle this. Ms.
309 Kessler replied that he can tell them what the legal parameters are, but she is almost certain they
310 cannot go on anyone's property without permission. She continued that the State statute is pretty
311 clear on that. Councilor Johnsen stated that she would be happy to meet with the City Attorney
312 about that. Ms. Kessler replied that the City Attorney would be protecting the City from any
313 legal issues and they can consult with him about what the parameters are. He would tell them
314 what kind of confirmation they need from the property owners to ensure the consultants were
315 indeed granted access. She will work with him directly on that.

316
317 Ms. Zerba asked if she heard Ms. Kessler say she has a list of all the carriage houses they will be
318 looking at in that section of the city. Ms. Kessler replied that she has a list of all of the properties
319 in the study area, and the consultants are looking at that list and narrowing it down to those
320 properties with historic barn or carriage house structures. Ms. Zerba asked if the consultants
321 would be doing that first step, not the Commission members. Ms. Kessler replied that the project
322 they applied for the grant for would not have required much volunteer work to support the work
323 of the consultants; it is just that now the scope has been expanded beyond the City's/Heritage
324 Commission's/consultants' control. Therefore the consultants will need support in order to meet
325 the numbers. Ms. Zerba replied that if they are doing it in the spring there is plenty of time to do
326 that.

327
328 **5) Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Projects**

329

330 Co-Chair Carey stated that they had talked about working with the Mayor on his interest in
331 neighborhood improvement projects for the city. She continued that it is her understanding that
332 he is interested in working with an area near the proposed Heritage Trail. She asked Ms. Kessler
333 to talk about that. Ms. Kessler stated that the Mayor has an interest in neighborhood work, as he
334 had mentioned to the Commission in January. She continued that since that time, a project that
335 is still in the works/being explored is something called “21 in 21.” It is an effort to identify
336 sources of funding that would invested into rehabilitating residential structures in a specific
337 geographic area. The intent is to try to target an area of housing that is on the verge of decline
338 and needs some investment of resources. Another element of this would be looking at the
339 different types of funding resources to identify what would be possible for the types of
340 investments. There has been talk about energy improvements or exterior improvements. And
341 then using it as a tool not only for supporting those specific properties, but also to support
342 neighborhood revitalization and to show that there is a commitment to investing in a specific
343 area. There is currently not a lot out there about that program and there is not a geographic area
344 that has been selected. It is very much in the early stages of trying to figure out what this
345 program could look like; then it would be about finding the funding to support it and identifying
346 a location in the city.

347
348 However, Ms. Kessler continued, she noted to Co-Chair Carey that there is a project happening
349 at Pat Russell Park (formerly Carpenter Field). The City’s Capital Improvement Plan had money
350 set aside to design and implement capital improvements to that park. That is now in the design
351 phase. A consultant is putting together a conceptual plan for the park, including a destination
352 playground, improvements to the athletic field, a walking trail, and a connection to downtown.
353 There are compelling statistics that make this an area of interest to focus on, since this park
354 redesign will really engage the neighborhoods surrounding it and there are so many people living
355 within walking distance of the park, of all ages. It is a real focal point. There has not been any
356 commitment publicly saying this is the area 21 in 21 will focus on, but this is the area that
357 Southwest Community Services (SCS) is focused on and they are trying to find projects that will
358 support the park redesign project, from a housing perspective. She mentioned this area to Co-
359 Chair Carey because it might be a place to start. Efforts could be quite compatible with other
360 things that are happening, in terms of getting people excited about the history or heritage of this
361 place and the neighborhood and how it evolved. There will be a lot of outreach through this park
362 planning process. Another element is that there are a lot of renters in the area, so having another
363 project that is going to have targeted outreach means that the Commission could potentially
364 combine efforts in trying to reach out to people that would otherwise be a little more difficult to
365 reach. It seemed like this could be a place for the Heritage Commission to join their efforts with
366 the efforts of another project, if they are interested. She knows the Heritage Commission has
367 mentioned other locations in the city, like the Island St. area and Maple Acres. She is not trying
368 to steer them into one area; she just wanted to let them know there could be a good opportunity
369 through this current project to tie in their efforts.

370
371 Co-Chair Carey suggested they put a meeting on the schedule for next month so they would have
372 the time to really get into a discussion about this – about what the expectations are and how they

373 might support the Mayor in his neighborhoods projects. Other members agreed. Ms. Kessler
374 stated that the Commission typically meets every other month but they could have a meeting in
375 October. She continued that the map on the screen is something she came up with after Co-Chair
376 Carey had asked for a map to help guide these conversations. She showed what the map has and
377 stated that it has been more difficult than anticipated to link the age of properties to the map. She
378 is still working on it, to color code all the properties 50 years or older, or 100 years or older. Co-
379 Chair Carey replied that that would be very helpful. Ms. Kessler replied that once she has the
380 age of the properties, she will send the map out to the Commission members. They can use the
381 map as a beginning planning tool. Co-Chair Carey thanked her. Ms. Kessler stated that she will
382 get this map out to them enough in advance of the October meeting so they can come to that
383 meeting with some sense of areas they want to focus on. Co-Chair Schuerman thanked her for
384 her wonderful work on this.

385

386 **6) Commission Membership**

387

388 Ms. Kessler stated that to give a brief update on membership, the Commission currently has a
389 full roster. Some members (Rose Carey and Susan D'Egidio) have terms that have expired but
390 have generously continued on. They had talked with the Mayor about this and he was okay with
391 them continuing to serve until they were able to find new members who were qualified and
392 interested in serving on the Commission. Co-Chair Carey stated that they have serious
393 considerations for the beginning of 2021, because it looks like everyone's term will expire in
394 2021. Ms. Kessler replied that most of those are first terms, and those people could serve second
395 terms if they want to. She continued that there are no term limits for alternates. As a reminder,
396 they did ask the Mayor about waiving term limits, and he was wary of doing that because other
397 boards and committees would ask for that, too. He was clear that he was willing to let Heritage
398 Commission members with expired terms continue to serve until they could find interested and
399 qualified replacements.

400

401 **7) Updates**

402

403 Ms. D'Egidio stated that she (the Demolition Review Subcommittee) had two demolitions from
404 earlier in the summer. She continued that a demolition application just came in yesterday, for a
405 red barn on Marlboro St. She has left a message for Alan Rumrill and he is supposed to get back
406 to her. The person she spoke with at City Hall did not know the age of the barn, but there was
407 some talk that it was moved from a different property to Marlboro St. and that there was some
408 connection with the Colony family. Because of that, she is trying to find out more about it. The
409 buyers are a couple from Connecticut and they want to build a house on it. She is working on
410 this application now. She has not had a chance to go by the property yet but she has pictures of
411 it. Kathy Harper has offered to take pictures inside. The buyers approached the Historical
412 Society to ask about the barn. They do not want it to be torn down but that is where they want to
413 build their house in a couple years. She is pleased that they want to try and save it, but the
414 application says they have a contractor to disassemble it for no cost, which she thinks means he

415 will repurpose the wood. She would like to know the Colony connection before anything else
416 happens, so she is working on it. She hopes Mr. Rumrill can help figure out the barn's age.

417
418 Ms. Powell stated that this used to be a farm; she read about it in one of Mr. Rumrill's books.
419 Ms. Kessler stated that the property was subdivided in 2004, if that helps. The barn was attached
420 with the house prior to that. Brief discussion ensued. Ms. D'Egidio stated that she may try and
421 talk with the contractor about his plans. She asked if it is okay if Kathy Harper takes pictures
422 inside and out – the property owners said she could. Ms. Kessler replied as long as she does it on
423 her own accord. If she were doing it on behalf of the City in some way the City would need
424 confirmation from the property owners. Ms. D'Egidio replied that she can get that. Ms. Kessler
425 replied that Ms. Harper can share the photos with the Heritage Commission to have on file.

426

427 **8) Next Meeting**

428

429 **9) Adjourn**

430

431 There being no further business, Co-Chair Carey adjourned the meeting at 5:33 PM.

432

433 Respectfully submitted by,
434 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

435

436 Reviewed and edited by Tara Kessler, Senior Planner.

1 **City of Keene**
2 **New Hampshire**

3
4
5 **HERITAGE COMMISSION**
6 **MEETING MINUTES**
7

8 **Wednesday, October 14,**
2020

4:00 PM

Remotely via Zoom

Members Present:

Rose Carey, Co-Chair
Susan D'Egidio
Louise Zerba, Alternate
Charlotte Schuerman, Co-Chair
Kelly Eagan Ballard
Cauley Powell
Councilor Gladys Johnsen (4:15 PM)

Staff Present:

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Erin Benik

9
10
11
12 Ms. Kessler read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to
13 Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions
14 of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared
15 COVID-19 State of Emergency.

16
17 **1) Call to Order**

18
19 Co-Chair Carey called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM. Roll call was conducted.

20
21 **2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – August 19, 2020 and September 15, 2020**

22
23 Ms. Kessler stated that the draft minutes might not have reached everyone, because there have
24 been technical difficulties, so the Commission can postpone adopting the meeting minutes if they
25 want to. Discussion ensued and Co-Chair Carey stated that they will postpone this until the next
26 meeting. Ms. Kessler clarified that if any member of the public asks to see the minutes, Staff
27 would provide them with the draft minutes, as they are public. But the minutes will not be posted
28 on the City's website until the Commission adopts them.
29
30

31 **3) Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Projects**

32

33 Ms. Kessler stated that this is a continuation from last month’s meeting – the topic of different
34 neighborhoods to consider exploring for doing neighborhood engagement projects. She created
35 a map for the Commission to use.

36

37 Co-Chair Carey stated that they talked about supporting the Mayor’s “21 in 21” project, which is
38 rehabilitating 21 houses in this coming year, by aligning any neighborhood heritage project with
39 this effort. She continued that part of that project focuses on specific neighborhoods. The
40 Commission talked earlier about helping to identify historic neighborhoods in Keene and maybe
41 doing a pictorial essay and research on these neighborhoods or documenting their unique
42 development and stories. They can talk about other ways to support the Mayor in his drive to
43 bring public awareness to the neighborhoods. The neighborhood surrounding Patricia Russell
44 Park is of potential interest as there is a City project underway to design and redevelop the park
45 and it is in close proximity to a diverse population of residents with respect to age and income.
46 The Commission has the opportunity now to talk among themselves and share ideas about how
47 to move forward, or not, with this project. She would like to hear people’s thoughts. The
48 Commission will also be supporting the Urban Barn & Carriage House research project this year.

49

50 Ms. D’Egidio asked what the question for the Commission is, regarding Patricia Russell Park.
51 Ms. Ballard asked where the park is. Ms. Kessler replied that it is downtown, near Church St.,
52 across from Beaver Brook. She showed it on a map on the screen. Brief discussion ensued
53 about the location. Ms. Kessler stated that it is mostly it is used for recreational programming
54 now, but there is a design project happening right now to reimagine and development a design
55 and construction plan for the park. Currently the plan shows a destination playground, increased
56 access to the park, a new walking trail along Beaver Brook, and upgrading the recreation field.
57 COVID-19 has changed plans but it was intended to be a pretty significant outreach project in
58 that neighborhood. Discussion continued about the location of the Park.

59

60 Ms. Powell asked, with regards to the neighborhoods in general and this Pat Russell Park area,
61 what they are calling the boundaries and how the boundaries are being decided, and is that the
62 project the Commission is being asked to do? Are they being asked to find cultural delineations
63 for the various parts of Keene that would justify it as a unique, separate neighborhood? Co-
64 Chair Carey replied that that was part of her understanding – helping pull together what they can
65 find about the histories and timeframes of when the neighborhoods were developed. She asked
66 Ms. Kessler if that is her understanding.

67

68 Ms. Kessler replied that in the early months of this year, when the Mayor talked with the
69 Commission, he had an idea about neighborhood engagement but not yet a defined project and
70 was supportive of what the Commission might undertake with respect to neighborhood planning
71 as it relates to the mission of the Commission. She noted that this proposed project has not yet
72 been defined and there are important questions to consider. For example, narrowing in on a
73 general geographic area is important, but what happens once a neighborhood area is picked?

74 What is the project, what is the task? Keene does not have clearly-defined neighborhoods. Part
75 of it would be trying to delineate what the area of the neighborhood is, based on certain criteria
76 that the Commission would come up with. However, the focus would be on the history of the
77 neighborhood and on its heritage. She continued that if part of the project's focus is trying to
78 brand the historic identity of the neighborhood area then there would need to be criteria to
79 determine the boundaries or what makes the neighborhood unique, what are some themes they
80 see in the development of the neighborhood, and so on and so forth.

81
82 Ms. Zerba asked if the Mayor is asking the Commission to determine the neighborhoods, instead
83 of the City Council or Staff. She asked if all of the 21 homes in the project would be in the same
84 neighborhood. She is unclear.

85
86 Ms. Kessler replied that she does not think the Mayor was expecting anything in particular from
87 the Commission with respect to "21 in 21". She continued that when he came in February it was
88 to introduce himself and get to know the Commission better and express the types of projects he
89 wanted to explore. There seemed to be a link between his interests and the Commission's work
90 and interests, but he did not have a direct ask for the Commission to take on any specific
91 projects. The "21 in 21" project is related in that it addresses a project at the neighborhood scale,
92 but, at the moment, it does have a geographic focus and the program details have not been
93 decided on yet. It is her understanding that this project is in its early stages, and the focus is on
94 identifying a geographic area to invest grant dollars or other dollars into properties that are on the
95 decline, to bring them back, through exterior modifications, energy efficiency retrofits, interior
96 modifications, etc. That project is early in its development and is a partnership with
97 Southwestern Community Services (SCS).

98
99 Ms. Zerba asked if this conversation is premature then. Ms. Kessler replied the Commission has
100 talked about the fact that the "21 in 21" project is happening and there may be benefits to tying
101 into it, if possible. The Commission has talked about neighborhood planning prior to the
102 conversation with the Mayor. What she took from the conversations was that if there is an
103 opportunity to work together, great, and it seems like the Mayor would be supportive of the
104 Commission's work in neighborhood planning. Furthermore, if there would be an opportunity to
105 connect the neighborhood planning to another project that is already out there, even better,
106 because there is more synergy that could happen. But it is up to the Commission. No one from
107 the City is currently relying on the Commission to take on this work, but it is good work and
108 exciting to think about. No one else is currently talking about identifying the history or heritage
109 of neighborhoods or defining neighborhoods that way.

110
111 Ms. D'Egidio asked: Regarding 21 in 21, once the neighborhoods are identified, are the 21
112 properties exclusive to one neighborhood or can they be in different neighborhoods? Ms.
113 Kessler replied that she is not sure, but she thinks there is an interest in containing it in one
114 geographic area for the impact it would have to the neighborhood. But depending on the funding
115 obtained, it might end up being a very different project from the current proposal.

116

117 Co-Chair Carey stated that Patricia Russell Park is also close to the rail trail. She continued that
118 the Commission had talked with the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC) and
119 Charles (Chuck) Redfern at their last meeting about how the Commission's research would also
120 help his project, by having the heritage documented. She needs to work with him some more
121 about the letter of support the Commission said they would give to him for that project. Ms.
122 Kessler stated that she has a draft for Co-Chair Carey and will email it to her.

123
124 Ms. Ballard stated that one positive about the COVID-19 is that it has forced everyone online.
125 She continued that this could be thus more inclusive and accessible, because everyone is online
126 now. She has researched her own house and street. She wonders if there is information out
127 there, about Keene neighborhoods' history, that this small group of people just does not know.
128 They could ask the Historical Society and others who are keenly interested in local history.
129 There has been a lot of remodeling going on lately and people might have more of this
130 information than the Commission knows.

131
132 Co-Chair Carey replied that there are many residents who know the history and they might come
133 forward with it if the Commission does a campaign to let people know they are researching
134 neighborhoods and would like to talk or email with people who are knowledgeable about where
135 they are living. Ms. Ballard replied that there are people who live and die in Keene. There is a
136 lot of history here that is accessible. People like to be asked, so there might be a way to ask. Co-
137 Chair Carey replied that maybe they could do that through the local TV station - maybe they
138 could have a program, or bulletins. And yes, the Historical Society. She asked if Ms. Kessler
139 knows another way. Ms. Kessler replied that The Shopper goes in all local mailboxes. Co-Chair
140 Carey replied that she is still writing for The Shopper so she could ask if she could write a guest
141 article there.

142
143 Ms. Kessler stated that they could do a press release/some kind of language to be shared in many
144 places, if the Commission had a plan for how to collect stories and information and put it into an
145 article, they could put it in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter, share it the with neighborhood
146 groups on Facebook, and so on and so forth. She continued that the City has about 1,000
147 subscribers to their email list. They could send it out to multiple platforms. They do not need to
148 pay to do this; it can be free. Co-Chair Carey replied that she will start working on the verbiage.
149 She asked if Ms. Ballard wants to help with that. Ms. Ballard replied yes. There is a lot of
150 information the Commission is missing, that other people have, so there is no need to do all the
151 legwork themselves. Co-Chair Carey replied yes, it sounds like a very practical way to begin.
152 She asked if everyone agrees with moving forward in this direction.

153
154 Ms. Powell stated that she is still confused about the project. She asked, is the Commission
155 drawing these preliminary lines on the map of Keene and then defining the neighborhoods
156 themselves? Would they be inadvertently affecting people's property values if people are
157 defined as not being part of a specific region that they wanted to be a part of or thought they
158 were a part of? Should the Commission coordinate with anyone else, like another committee, to
159 determine how to define neighborhoods, or is this based just on heritage? Are they doing this for

160 all of Keene or just one area? Co-Chair Carey replied that she agrees that they have to look at
161 the full scope – when they start in on this, where does it take them, and what impact does it have
162 for everyone?

163
164 Ms. Zerba asked if Co-Chair Carey was thinking of sending letters to mostly people in the
165 Church St. neighborhood, or all over Keene. Co-Chair Carey replied that she had not thought to
166 mail any letters. Ms. Zebra replied that she was thinking about the article in the paper. Co-Chair
167 Carey replied it would talk about ideas and give people a way to respond. She continued that
168 people could respond even to the whole concept of identifying neighborhoods, and whether they
169 want to look at it more comprehensively, and if they really have the ability and right to define the
170 neighborhoods, and whether it will impact real estate values. That is a good question that she
171 had not thought about. Maybe it is about loosely drawing an area or circle, not necessarily a line.

172
173 Co-Chair Carey asked Ms. Kessler where they go with this, if it is now becoming a political
174 question to some extent. Ms. Kessler replied that those are all important questions. When the
175 Commission talks about neighborhood planning she always assumed that since it is the Heritage
176 Commission, it was about trying to identify historic neighborhoods and understand the history of
177 neighborhoods. People talk about “East Keene” and “North Central Keene,” neighborhoods just
178 based on cardinal directions, and there is the Maple Acres subdivision, for example. When the
179 Commission has talked about neighborhood planning and projects she assumed it would be, for
180 example, exploring the history of the Island St. neighborhood, how it became developed, what it
181 looked like when it was developed, who lived there, and what the heritage of the place is. That is
182 a more benign project than creating more broadly focused neighborhood plans, which should be
183 more bottom-up, planned by what the neighborhoods themselves see and want for their future
184 and what their goals are. The Commission’s neighborhood planning is more about history. She
185 stated she thought Ms. Ballard’s idea of reaching out to people and starting there is a great step.
186 It gets engagement from the neighborhoods instead coming in with a predetermined proposal.
187 Sometimes people get concerned when they start reaching out, thinking there might be a historic
188 district coming and regulations to follow. But reaching out and getting people interested in
189 sharing what they know about their homes and neighborhoods is something that has fewer issues;
190 it is not like picking a place and drawing lines around a place. But even if they were to do that, if
191 they did it from the historical perspective it is within the Commission’s roles and responsibilities
192 as written in the City Code to do this research. That is how the Historic District was formed.
193 That is what they did in the Lower Main St. area. They have done similar projects on
194 Washington St. and Court St.

195
196 Ms. Zerba replied that she likes that a lot. She continued that she likes the idea of writing
197 articles to get people excited about sharing the history of their properties that they have done the
198 research on. Maybe they can do something similar to what Phil Falkner did, and have a picture
199 of the home along with the history that has been discovered. She continued that she thinks they
200 should wait on proposing involvement with “21 in 21” until they are asked.

201

202 Co-Chair Carey stated that she agrees very much. She continued that another way she had
203 envisioned this project is: the Commission has been working with barns and the agricultural
204 development of Keene, and tracking that agricultural development into how the workers began to
205 cluster in certain areas, and the factories and factory workers, and that began to define areas. She
206 would like to see it as a progression of how the city as a whole developed, and how the
207 agriculture moved further and further out. This would allow them to tie it to the barn and
208 carriage house research they have been doing. It would allow them to look at the city as a whole,
209 rather than single out any particular area, but it would also allow them to research given areas as
210 they developed. It is a broader way to go, and more time-consuming, but less political and
211 accomplishes the same goal.

212
213 Ms. Ballard stated that she does not think they have enough information to even think about
214 defining neighborhoods. She continued that maybe it is because she has not lived in Keene very
215 long, but she does not know which neighborhoods were “all factory workers” or “all Italian” or
216 so on and so forth. She learned about the history of her own street, and people on her street and
217 their occupations and it was fascinating. She feels like that information is out there and she is
218 sure other people are excited about it, too. There are lots of historical directories to learn from,
219 which were published every two years. People love to be asked about what they know. And yes,
220 she agrees with Ms. Zerba about not seeking involvement in “21 in 21”.

221
222 Co-Chair Carey replied that she was not intending for the Commission to be a part of “21 in 21”;
223 she meant for them to be in *support* of that project. She continued that researching
224 neighborhoods would help bring in the interest. And this is another way to engage residents.

225
226 Ms. Kessler stated that she thinks the best method would be for the Commission to have a
227 website that people can upload photos to and use to share their information. She continued that
228 the City has had more project-oriented websites in recent years. She gave examples of others.
229 She continued that a website might be a great tool for this. She offered to help with this task. Co-
230 Chair Carey replied that she would love a website. Ms. Ballard replied that she loves the idea,
231 too. Ms. Zerba agreed. Brief discussion continued and Co-Chair Carey stated that she would be
232 glad to help with colors and font/the aesthetics of the website.

233
234 Ms. Zerba asked if Co-Chair Carey could, before the next meeting, think about what she wants to
235 write in the article and then the Commission could discuss that, along with Ms. Kessler’s
236 research about the website. Co-Chair Carey replied that she and Ms. Ballard can get together
237 and talk about that. Ms. Kessler stated that she will get a website started and Co-Chair Carey
238 and anyone else who wants to give input can, and at the next meeting, they can talk about what
239 features they want to see. Discussion ensued about website features and maps. Ms. Ballard
240 shared ideas for what an interactive map could be like, allowing people to upload their
241 information to share on the map. Co-Chair Carey stated that the Commission has done a lot of
242 work on the Washington St. and School St. areas and thus have some data they could load into
243 the map. Discussion continued. Co-Chair Carey stated that it would be a wonderful way to be
244 able to collect information, if it could be done. Ms. Kessler stated that the grant the Commission

245 applied for last fall, which she will resubmit for them, was for funding to build a more
246 professional website/a content management system. It was less about collecting information but
247 would have been about the walking tours and disseminating the information the Commission has
248 collected over the past 20 years.

249

250 Ms. Zerba asked if they would need permission from the property owners whose information
251 they will be sharing. Co-Chair Carey replied that the permission was given at the time of
252 information collection. Ms. Kessler stated that if information was collected from public records
253 it would be legal for the Commission to share it, although it would be good for them to let the
254 property owners know.

255

256 Co-Chair Carey stated that there are things for them to work on between now and the next
257 meeting. She asked if there was anything they needed to vote on. Ms. Zerba replied that she
258 does not think so, because they are gathering information.

259

260 Ms. Powell stated that it almost sounds like two different projects. She continued that they do
261 not want to guide people too much; they want to hear their stories and hear what information
262 they have about their homes and properties, and receive whatever they want to share. But then
263 maybe there should also be, thinking about the website, a more formal/structured database that
264 they are creating an interactive element to. For that they would want to have specific categories
265 of information. Should they be delineating those elements they want to be asking for or
266 receiving? For example, build date, builder, owners, sellers, events like fires, cultural
267 happenings, important people living there, and so on and so forth.

268

269 Ms. Zerba replied that they have quite a few items on the inventory forms; maybe they could just
270 use those. Co-Chair Carey replied yes, those inventory forms have many items, but they also
271 want to get more personal and find out about not just the houses, but the people who lived in
272 them. Some 'founding fathers' lived in the early houses. Ms. Ballard replied that maybe that is
273 the piece that helps them tell more stories about the houses, if they are going back further. She
274 continued that she is also thinking structurally, about how houses have transformed over time; it
275 would be fascinating to have that information.

276

277 Ms. Kessler stated that in response to Ms. Powell's thoughts about categories, when a person is
278 applying to have a property listed on a national register of historic places, there are categories for
279 the applicant to address. She showed a list on the screen, and stated that they may not be the
280 exact categories to use, but they cover a lot of what Ms. Powell was mentioning, such as setting,
281 materials, design, location, workmanship, and so on and so forth. These are the types of
282 information that might lead to the characterization of the history of a property, including the
283 stories of people who lived there before. This might be a place to start.

284

285 Ms. Powell stated that it gets her thinking that maybe a future project would be an oral history
286 project, if they are able to get information from people and they have the beginnings of a
287 database or reference tool for the properties themselves, then they start associating people

288 recording and filming the stories. She does not know if Keene has an archive of oral histories.
289 Ms. Zerba replied that they have a few oral histories, such as of the railroads, and those are
290 housed at the Historical Society and the Library, and there are others that she cannot remember
291 at the moment. Ms. Powell replied that maybe they could make it a goal to start collecting
292 stories from older residents. Ms. Ballard suggested they reach out to residents in local nursing
293 homes, and talk with people who used to live in these houses. She continued that nursing homes
294 are another place to let people know the Commission is looking for this information. Ms.
295 Kessler stated that the Library used to host “Story Circles” but she cannot remember the details,
296 so she will look into it and ask other Staff how that worked.

297

298 **4) Updates**

299

300 Ms. D’Egidio stated that at the last meeting they were talking about the barn on Marlboro St.
301 She continued that she has 20 good pictures of the interior and exterior. She asked if she should
302 send them to Ms. Kessler. Ms. Kessler replied yes, she will be able to receive them at her work
303 email address. Ms. D’Egidio stated that there was no Colony family connection, but the pictures
304 are great and she will forward them.

305

306 **5) Next Meeting**

307

308 Co-Chair Carey asked if they should meet again in one month or two. After brief discussion, the
309 group decided to meet in November, on the second Wednesday.

310

311 There being no further business, Co-Chair Carey adjourned the meeting at 4:55 PM.

312

313 Respectfully submitted by,
314 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

315

316 Reviewed and edited by Tara Kessler, Senior Planner.