

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, May 12, 2021**

**4:30 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Cauley Powell, Chair  
Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair  
Councilor Gladys Johnsen  
Rose Carey  
Louise Zerba, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Erin Benik

**1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

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

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM. Roll call was taken.

Tara Kessler informed the committee that Erin Benik would not be present. Chair Powell appointed Louise Zebra as a full voting member for the meeting.

**2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – March 10, 2021**

Louise Zerba made a correction to the minutes, referring to the section on discussion about the Italian neighborhood. The line stated that Butler Court “has” Italian families, and it should state “had,” because it is now occupied by college students. Louise Zerba made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2021 with the aforementioned correction. Chair Powell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) Updates**

**A) NH Preservation Alliance Awards**

Ms. Kessler stated they submitted nominations in all four categories for the NH Preservation Alliance Awards and 91 Court Street was awarded in the category of rehabilitation. She informed the commission that the award ceremony was later that day at 5:00 PM and that invites were shared with the Commission.

**B) CLG Grant FY 2022**

Ms. Kessler informed the committee that the CLG grant had been awarded, pending the availability of federal funds. She reminded everyone that the grant is for the web-based portal where the public will be able to upload images, stories, etc. to a specific point on the map.

**C) LCHIP & Conservation Moose Plate Grants**

Ms. Kessler updated the committee that there had been internal discussion about funds and a decision was made to try for an LCHIP grant. She submitted a letter of intent and reported that they are working on trying to find \$25,000 for the match component. That grant money would be for developing a design/concept for the restoration of the capstones on the Stone Arch Bridge. Ms. Kessler mentioned that they attempted to apply for a Moose Plate grant, but this project would not be eligible.

**D) Urban Barn Inventory Project Discussion**

Ms. Kessler reported that Rose Carey had done extensive work at the Historical Society and located all available historical photos for the 200 properties the consultants requested information on. She explained that the consultants would then add everything into their report and move forward by narrowing the list down further to about 40 properties, for which they'll do a formal inventory.

Rose Carey asked if there was going to be a formal presentation of the consultant's findings to the public. Ms. Kessler replied that they do plan to have a presentation and mentioned the grant wanted them to send letters to the property owners as well. The City of Keene will host but the consultants will deliver the presentation. She stated this will likely occur in late summer. Ms. Carey added that she has some ideas for the presentation and would love to be involved.

**E) Other**

There were no other updates.

**4) Historical Society of Cheshire County & NH Preservation Alliance Membership**

Ms. Kessler stated that each year the commission elects to be a member of the NH Preservation Alliance and the fee comes out of their annual budget. She asked the Commission if they wanted to continue with that membership for the current year.

Additionally, Ms. Carey had brought to Tara's attention that the commission was not a member of the Historical Society of Cheshire County. She asked if the commission wanted to become a member and, if so, at what level. She suggested a contributing membership for \$100 per year, and listed the other options as \$40 for individual and \$200 as another level. Chair Powell asked if the commission had been a member of the Historical Society in the past and Ms. Kessler replied that she didn't believe they had but did not know.

Ms. Carey stated the benefits of joining would allow them to be more informed of the Historical Society's projects, help solidify their collaboration, and would be a step towards appreciating and creating a more congenial work relationship with them. Chair Powell agreed it would be a positive move. Ms. Zerba added that she was in support of joining both groups. Short discussion ensued about pricing level.

Rose Carey made a motion to direct staff to register the Keene Heritage Commission as a member of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, at the \$100 level, and the NH Preservation Alliance. Louise Zebra seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**5) Continued Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Project/Website**

In light of the Commission receiving the CLG grant, Chair Powell encouraged them to begin planning for the Neighborhood Heritage Project and website. She reminded everyone that they had decided on the Italian neighborhood but hadn't yet defined a geographical boundary for it.

Discussion ensued about the Italian neighborhood boundary with the Commission landing on a starting point area consisting of both sides of Island Street, going across to Pearl Street and up to West Street, including the Winchester Court area. Of note, these boundaries were only a conversation and nothing definitive.

Ms. Zerba offered to speak to Timothy Carbone and/or Dennis Ditullio as sources of information in the Italian neighborhood. Chair Powell suggested that the Commission approach those individuals with the rough boundaries they identified and see if they agree with them or have different recommendations. She also had a contact, Victor Dintino, who she stated she would reach out to for information. Susan DeGidio stated she could reach out to Mary Ellen Angelo, formerly Pellerin, thinking that she would have some information.

Ms. Carey asked if they wanted to keep in mind that Winchester Court and Butler Court are no longer occupied by Italian families. Ms. Zebra replied that from a historical perspective it might be nice to have that information for those areas.

Chair Powell brought up the Italian Society in Keene as a potential opportunity for gathering information. Councilor Johnsen stated the Italian Society is still very active and have regular meetings.

Chair Powell asked the Commission if they wanted to do outreach to the aforementioned individuals and simultaneously start looking at historical records for information. Ms. Kessler replied that the consultants wouldn't begin work until July 1<sup>st</sup> at the earliest, and the one piece of information that would likely be most helpful for them to start work would be at least a broad area defining the Italian neighborhood. From there, she suggested they could define the boundary further as they collect information.

Ms. Kessler also suggested that it would be smart to look for other consultants in addition to the one she received a quote from, that way they can compare costs. She stated that she'd continue to look for other options and could present on this at the July meeting.

Chair Powell added that as long as the grant agreement is in place at the next meeting then it sounded like a good plan to engage in discussions with multiple consultants.

Ms. Zerba stated it would be nice to have videos of people telling old stories of the neighborhood. Councilor Johnsen suggested having a panel of a few people and asking some basic questions. Ms. Carey added that they could have an event at the Italian club and film it.

Ms. Kessler had to leave meeting at 4:40 PM.

Chair Powell summarized their discussion, stating that the plan moving forward is to reach out to the aforementioned individuals in the community and have some conversations with them about their idea of the boundary for the Italian neighborhood. This would take place before the next meeting.

**6) Next Meeting – July 14, 2021**

Chair Powell reminded everyone of the next meeting on July 14, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

**7) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 4:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

Additional edits by,  
Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office