

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Marilyn Huston
Brian Lee

1) Call to Order

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:16 PM.

2) Elections

Chair Powell announced the first order of business to be elections for Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Carey moved that Ms. Powell remain on as Chair and nominated Ms. DeGidio as Vice Chair. Ms. Zerba seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) Minute of Previous Meeting

Ms. Zerba made a correction on line 55, when talking about the Italian neighborhood project she suggested using the term consultant rather than a contractor. Ms. Brunner added that the consultant's name is Ray Corson of Corson GIS Solutions. Ms. Carey made a motion to accept the minutes of November 10, 2021 as amended. Chair Powell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4) Discussion on Neighborhood Heritage Project

Ms. Brunner referenced the packet describing the scope of work. She reviewed that the City selected Corson GIS Solutions as the consultant for the project and Mr. Corson has already begun work creating a web based tool. Ms. Brunner explained that there are two sides to the

project, a collection side and a story map side that will be public facing. Viewers will be able to go online and see an interactive map. Ms. Brunner showed screen shots of the collection side of the application on the computer screen. She explained that people can upload photos, audio and video to the platform. Ms. Zerba asked how they will ensure that appropriate content is being submitted. Ms. Brunner stated once the public uploads content it will then go into a holding space where someone from the back end will have to approve it. Ms. Brunner further explained that the story map side of the project will be created after the collection side, and showed an example of a story map on the Parks and Recreation Department page.

Chair Powell asked if Mr. Corson is looking for feedback from the commission. Ms. Brunner answered that it would be helpful for them to provide him with background information on the Italian neighborhood to populate the website. Additionally, Mr. Corson suggested having some stories already loaded when the story map goes live and Ms. Brunner suggested they start to collect stories now. She mentioned that Jim Sterling is excited to be interviewed.

Ms. Brunner suggested they begin to think about ways to promote the project when it goes live, stating that the timeline to have the collection side done and the story map ready to go live is by the end of March.

Ms. Zerba asked if they have to present to City Council first before reaching out to schools.

Ms. DeGidio asked what the process is if they have someone in mind to interview.

Ms. Brunner stated interviewees can either go onto the website and enter their information themselves, or the interview can be conducted face to face and either be recorded and uploaded or written out and submitted by a member of the commission. She added that it will depend on individual preference.

Ms. Brunner reminded everyone that one requirement of the grant is an in-kind match, which they put down 50 hours of volunteer time for. Chair Powell stated Ms. Huston had done some time already by going to the Historical Society and pulling up articles. Ms. Brunner encouraged them to track their in-kind hours, noting that it will be important to record for grant purposes.

Ms. Carey volunteered to take photos of the Italian neighborhood.

Ms. Zerba suggested they coordinate the contacts they plan to interview to avoid contacting them more than once. Chair Powell suggested they create a working group. Ms. Carey stated that she'd prefer to be given a contact to interview and take it from there. Ms. Brunner stated staff can help with coordinating as well.

Chair Powell stated, when the season changes, it may be nice to walk around the neighborhood and knock on doors to gather information. Ms. Carey suggested that they could also distribute pamphlets.

Chair Powell suggested they pull up the contacts mentioned from previous meetings and start there. Ms. Carey mentioned possibly doing storyboards in City Hall.

Chair Powell had the idea of obtaining a current photo of the interview contacts as well as a past photo. Discussion ensued about taking two hour time slots at the food co-op or library to interview/hand out pamphlets. Chair Powell also brought up the Italian Club in Keene and Councilor Johnsen stated she will reach out to them. Chair Powell suggested they try and schedule a meeting with the leaders of the Italian Club and then go from there, and there was agreement from the commission.

Discussion ensued with regards to project timeline and involving schools. Ms. Brunner stated the Division of Historical Resources (DHR) wants them to try and wrap up the project by the end of July or early August. She stated that would mean they'd need to reach out to schools this spring and suggested they start with career centers or the SAU office. She added that getting the school system involved is only a suggestion from DHR. Chair Powell suggested that even if they aren't successful getting the school system involved, they should at least let the schools know that the tool is available if they want to utilize it in the future for history projects. Ms. Zerba stated she would spearhead reaching out to schools and obtaining permission to contact principals. Ms. Brunner added Saint Joseph's School to the list for being contacted, mentioning that they are not in SAU29 but they are close to the neighborhood.

Short discussion ensued with regards to recording the interviews. Suggestions were to use library resources or personal cell phones. Chair Powell stated she will build a guide on how to record interviews as well as questions to ask, similar to a script. She suggested a good goal would be to have the guide done by the next meeting to review and then they can start interviewing.

Ms. Zerba suggested they try to get on the Dan Mitchell radio show since it has a lot of listeners. Ms. Carey agreed that would be an easy way to get the word out. She added that she will put articles in the Monadnock Shopper as well. Ms. Zerba stated they might want to include the interview questions in the Shopper article and Chair Powell suggested including the link for the live website as well. Ms. Brunner reminded them that staff can help with materials needed for interviewing.

5) New CLG Grant Discussion

Chair Powell stated the new timeline for the grants was included in the packet. She explained that the ongoing Italian Neighborhood grant is running through September but they are trying to shorten the cycle so the 2022 grant will be awarded and administered with an overlap period. Ms. Brunner stated March 1st at 8:00am is the deadline for letters of intent, March 7-18th DHR staff will schedule meetings with applicants, March 21st they will send invitations, May 16th at 8:00am applications are to be submitted and by June 2022 grants will be awarded and projects can begin once paperwork is complete.

Chair Powell stated if they do receive the grant they could be working on both projects simultaneously and suggested they keep that in mind for in-kind hours.

Chair Powell reminded the committee that the LOI is going to include 3 different project proposals:

1. Mill building survey, similar to past survey projects.
2. Black Heritage Trail/Recovering Black Voices project in partnership with the Historical Society. Here they'd support the project already started and maybe bring in an expert and develop presentation elements.
3. Native American site by the middle school. This would entail hosting information sessions or bringing in an expert, organizing an event, raising awareness and increasing signage.

Ms. Carey asked if the mill building survey would include type of industry. Chair Powell stated it will be an architectural survey plus historical background, similar to the Urban Barns project they completed in the past. Ms. Carey suggested 'Early Industry,' from around the 1800's to 1950's, would be better terminology. There was general agreement.

Ms. Carey suggested highlighting artifacts and automobiles. Ms. Brunner asked what they would choose if they end up having to focus on a more specific geographic location. Ms. Carey suggested right downtown in that immediate neighborhood. Chair Powell stated they could define it by locations that had a minimum number of employees working in the industry. She added that she did touch base with the Historical Society about the project and they said they have a lot of information they will share.

Ms. Brunner requested a small write-up for each project. Ms. Carey stated in the past she used to sit with staff and brainstorm to help write the LOI and she, Ms. Brunner and Chair Powell planned to sit down and do that in the upcoming week, as the deadline is March 1st.

Chair Powell stated she connected with Jennifer Carroll of the Historical Society who informed her that they've been running a volunteer project for about a year now. The volunteers cover the county and look through records and flag entries that lead to African American families or individuals for census data. Chair Powell stated they only have 12 volunteers in total so they could use more if anyone is interested. The thought is that they use a CLG grant to support the ongoing efforts with some of their own volunteered time, and also bring in an expert to do some more nuanced searching. She went on to state that the project may take more than a year and the end goal is site recognition and to raise awareness. She added that the Historical Society in partnership with Black Heritage Trail of NH is looking to create a website with searchable records.

6) CLG Mini Grant Opportunities

Ms. Brunner stated, for the National Alliance of Preservation Commission membership reimbursement, all they have to do is make the request. The next mini grant opportunity was for camp commission assistance and mentoring program, which she stated will take a little more thought and will be a quick turnaround as the deadline is Monday. The last opportunity is the National Alliance Preservation Commission forum held in Cincinnati Ohio. Ms. Brunner stated it's a travel grant to send people to the forum if anyone on the committee wants to go. She added that staff cannot attend this year but in the future they may be interested in going.

Chair Powell suggested they should definitely do the grant for the membership reimbursement. She went on to state that the second grant sounds like it requires significant involvement and suggested they hold off on that, but keep it in mind for the future as it's a great opportunity. The committee decided to hold off on the travel grant for the time being.

7) Next Meeting

Chair Powell stated the next meeting is March 9, 2022.

8) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner