

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

4:30 PM

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

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair (remote)
Rose Carey
Marilyn Huston
Brian Lee
Molly Ellis
Louise Zerba, Alternate (non-voting)

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician

Members Not Present:

Councilor Gladys Johnsen

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM and roll call ensued.

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – October 12, 2022

Revision: on line 168, change the word “crow” to “crowd”.

A motion by Ms. Huston to approve the October 12, 2022 meeting minutes as amended was duly seconded by Ms. Carey and the motion carried unanimously.

3) CLG Annual Report

Mr. Schoefmann said he needed to file the annual report with the NH Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to indicate whether any new buildings have been added to the Historic Registry; there had not been such activity. He said Planner, Evan Clements, was helping him to complete that form and there was no help Mr. Schoefmann needed from the Commission.

Mr. Schoefmann mentioned that there would be a future transition to integrate Mr. Clements more with this position. Mr. Schoefmann would carry out the end of the 2021 neighborhood grant, but for the sake of him moving some of his more significant responsibilities forward as the Mapping Technician, Mr. Clements would eventually take over as Staff Liaison. Mr. Schoefmann will miss working with the

Commission when the time comes. Everyone agreed that Mr. Schoefmann would be missed. Mr. Clements is also involved with the Historic District Commission. The transition would likely be later in 2023.

4) 2022 CLG Grant Update

Mr. Schoefmann said this was another thing Mr. Clements would start moving forward. Now is the time for Staff to appear before the City Council seeking approval from them for the City Manager to sign the agreement for the grant. That update was sent to DHR. He imagined that by early December that would begin to take shape, with paperwork filed at the State. He recalled that those awards are not funded until the Governor and Council approve them in February or March, or later in some years.

Mr. Schoefmann had not been in touch with the selected consultant for an update and neither had Chair Powell. Chair Powell asked whether Mari Brunner, Senior Planner, would continue being involved with this grant, or just Mr. Clements. Mr. Schoefmann did not have the full answer yet and would find out. Chair Powell's last contact was the consultant reaching out to Ms. Brunner with a question, and hopefully Ms. Brunner followed-up. Ms. Brunner had thought it would be the spring term for work with students and so hopefully the funding would align. Mr. Schoefmann said to bear in mind that there are three years now to complete these CLG grant projects. Mr. Schoefmann thought DHR got a lot of feedback on their old, shorter timeline. Chair Powell hoped that extra time would be for the consultants and students. Mr. Schoefmann would talk to Ms. Brunner and Mr. Clements about this. Chair Powell could also make the introduction and answer any questions with Mr. Clements. This project is partnered more traditionally with the Historical Society.

5) 2021 CLG Neighborhood Heritage Project Update

Mr. Schoefmann referred to his tasks since his last meeting. Since then, he scheduled a meeting with Jim Sterling. Ms. Brunner had done some original research on him, but it was lost. However, that is Ms. Brunner's father-in-law and so it was easy to reach him again. He was very amenable to meeting with Mr. Schoefmann and providing some sound bites. Mr. Schoefmann would meet with him later this week. Mr. Schoefmann referred to the Google Drive that Ms. Powell shared. She said she is paying for AI transcriptions that are very poor.

At present, Chair Powell had film interviews with Vic Dintino and John DiBernardo. The Chair finally spoke successfully with Bob Mallet at the Italian Society, and she interviewed him the past weekend during an awards event she attended with him. At the event, they announced the project and people were very happy and excited, and many signed-up to participate. She thought the next step was to distribute those interviews amongst the Commission members. The Chair said she was struggling with the right way to get photos into the app. Her archival side wanted high-resolution beautiful files, but she recognized the point of the project is crowd sourcing and any way people can get images into the app saves them for posterity.

Mr. Schoefmann thought it depended on people's comfort levels with the Commission taking their family documents; there was no procedure yet. There is a high-resolution scanner in Mr. Schoefmann's office that was available for the Commission's use. Chair Powell has a flatbed scanner at work too. Mr. Schoefmann said the plan would be to take the documents, if people are comfortable, in a weatherproof case for transport. They could arrange times when Mr. Schoefmann picks them up, scans them, and returns them. He added that most cameras on phones are excellent, and he could take photos of the documents. Ms. Zerba asked if they could digitize them to a higher resolution if taken with a phone. Mr. Schoefmann thought that they would be the quality of the phone's photo. Mr. Lee said it was possible to crop those photos, but they would still be a phone's photo. Chair Powell agreed that for some documents, they might stick to the glass in their frames, and so it would not be prudent to take them out for scanning.

Ms. Zerba asked if the families would need to sign a waiver on the documents and photos, especially if the public would be seeing them. Mr. Schoefmann thought the City Attorney would likely say a waiver would be prudent. Ms. Huston agreed and suggested putting the documents in an envelope and to document on the envelope what is inside for an inventory, and set a date of when they would be returned. Chair Powell agreed it would be good to have clear communication. Chair Powell thought about rights and permissions and believed that the act of someone adding their personal photos to the app would be them giving their consent for use in the project. She said it begged the question of how to confirm consent if the Commission or Mr. Schoefmann were the ones uploading the images. She said it was possible that the right action would be to digitize and upload the documents with the participants.

Mr. Schoefmann noted that he posted a Facebook update with a link to Mr. Lee's work on the Wix site; Mr. Schoefmann would monitor the site for new submissions. Mr. Schoefmann thought that it was mostly a capture tool, and the details were getting those documents and transitioning them into digital to be in the story map. Chair Powell said she was struck that the Dintinos had the actual tickets from the White Star Line that they used to come from Italy, which is remarkable because they are in very good condition. Such items are ones that would be good to take photos of because the Commission does not want to be in custody of such important items.

Chair Powell said that everyone she spoke with at the Italian Society event was excited and felt they had a lot of stories to share. They did audio recordings at the event with Rita Lundgren (nee Caldarelli), Mae Caldarelli, and John [Mr. Caldarelli], who is particularly enthusiastic and might be the oldest living member of the Italian Community at 95 years old. She said that Tim Carbone would also really like to be involved. The Grossis, the Caldarellis, and Ann Eastman all want to participate. Chair Powell wanted to get some filmed content with women because it was clear that the male and female cultural experiences are very different. Ms. Lundgren [Rita] and her daughters would like to participate and go through old photos.

The Chair's fear at this point was how little time left there was to do all of this before the presentation at 7:00 PM on December 14, which is during the Historic Society's immigration event. Mr. Schoefmann suggested only providing an update at the presentation instead of a formal synopsis of the whole project; something to convince more people to participate. Chair Powell thought a lot of people learned of the

project from the Historical Society's newsletter. People had reached out since asking for more details, such as whether the conversations would be recorded or how they would see it. People did not seem to want to miss what this Commission has to say about the community.

Ms. Carey and Ms. Ellis had found an abundance of research for the presentation, which they summarized (much of this was printed from the Historic Society's online archive):

- An article by Deven Morris on the history of the Italian Neighborhood as a high school project that really summarizes the history.
- Found "then" photos and Ms. Carey would borrow Mr. Lee's camera to take "now" photos for the presentation. They could be displayed in the lobby.
- Made notes of interview topics, like the flooding issue.
- Found school photos from the Cleveland School and Pearl Street School from the teens and 20s. The goal is to interview some descendants of those school children.
- Found a lot of farm photos from 363 Winchester Street.
- Looked-up local businesses, like Pete's Restaurant, where McDonalds is now. There is a nice photo of it and more research on it would be helpful. Ms. Zerba knows Pete's daughter.
- The neighborhood that has baseball names is interesting. Alan Rumrill at the Historical Society provided a pamphlet on baseball in Keene. He had many anecdotes on that. Mr. Rumrill did a series of photos on baseball in that area at the Historical Society. There was a field on Island Street near the Italian Club. Mr. Schoefmann said that still exists as the Wood Street Field. Many people were employed in the mills and factories in that area.
- Mr. DiBernardo reminisced about fishing at the Mill Pond and up the Ashuelot River.
- A nice photo from the Dintino's wedding on their anniversary in the Sentinel.
- Took photos of the old street directories. They wrote down all street names in the Italian neighborhood for 1916 and 1931 to compare to see if families had lived there for that duration. There could be a sign at the presentation showing the families who did live there for those 24 years and see if any participants know those people. In the interviews the Chair had done so far, she did not have such research to base her questions on and this would help develop more targeted questions for future interviews that help stimulate people's memories.

Chair Powell questioned the extent to which the information should be uploaded though the app for the grant. Mr. Schoefmann said the ultimate product is the story map and what the Commission does with it. He thought it was important to include some of the outreach the Commission does with people but ultimately it is about outreach to see what is out there that the Commission is unaware of in terms of the initial app.

Ms. Carey asked if it were possible to invite interested people to a Commission meeting and have them bring their documents; they could digitize them and do interviews. She thought this would allow the project to be completed in a timelier manner. Mr. Schoefmann said there was no issue reserving space at City Hall as long as there are no conflicts; other suggestions were the large room at the old courthouse and the Library. A benefit of the Library is that the Makerspace is there, and they would likely be happy to help. Mr. Schoefmann would email the Library about this option and check their available dates. Chair Powell said her partner is a cinematographer and so they had been filming interviews with his

professional equipment and she would have to see their availability for such a meeting. She added that the Commission's meeting room was not the most desirable space for an interview. Chair Powell said that it would be important to not have a quorum at this gathering. Another option is to interview via Zoom and record the meeting, which saves as a film file.

The Commission continued discussing topics to consider. One was the historic flooding of the Italian neighborhood. Ms. Carey said that the gas tanks at the end of Emerald Street were flooded at one point. Mr. Rumrill had some stories about that. Ms. Zerba suggested wine making by the DiTullios, which the Chair heard was a large community endeavor. The Italian Society still imports grape juice to make wine and they still have old wine presses. Ms. Ellis said that the DiTullios were on her list and that Mr. DiTullio was endowed the MDS Citizen of Honor Award, which was the ceremony the Chair attended. Mr. Schoefmann thought part of the challenge would be to create topics to funnel this information into the story map, which the Chair said is designed for physical space but is moving through time. The Commission continued reviewing an example of a story map and its features. Video can be embedded in story maps. Chair Powell thought the story map concept looked fantastic. The consultant would help create the story map.

Mr. Schoefmann will share potential dates to invite people in to share documents and stories. He advised updating the expectation of what the presentation at the Historical Society would be. It would be more of a project update and invitation to participate. All agreed that was the smart thing to do. People can come and hear about the project and share their opinions. By the end of summer, there should be collection and narrative pieces inputted into the final project. He asked everyone to keep a log of the hours they are spending on this because it is a part of the soft match of the grant. Ms. Carey would be in touch with Mr. Schoefmann about some large posters for the event. The Community Development Department no longer has a camera to loan.

The Commission decided on the following main topics for the story map:

- Families and Culture
 - Could use proverbs
 - The families that were present for many years
 - Family group photos and houses
 - Immigration
 - Specific stories about how and when
- Education and Faith
 - All children went off to St. Joseph's School. Discussion ensued people who were associated with education at the time.
 - The Dintinos have some photos of students at St. Joseph's School.
 - Until children went to school, they did not become American because they were being raised so culturally Italian.
 - Faith and Religion
 - Many families went to St. Bernard's Church.
- Agriculture, Industry, and Food
 - Includes food

- Working at the mills
- Pete's Restaurant
 - Pam Raymond is his daughter and Ms. Zerba would try to find her contact and send her the link about the project website to her.
- Farming and gardens
 - There was an issue of growing tomatoes and who had the best in town.
- As Butler Court was bought out and the college moved the Caldarelli garden abutted a dorm at the college. They gave produce to the students so they would not mess with the gardens.
- Recreation and Nature
 - Baseball
 - Fishing
 - Flooding
 - A house in the area is marked with how high the flood waters got and Ms. Carey would try to find it.

Families Then and Now would be a throughline of all four topics. There had not been much research yet on education and faith.

Chair Powell asked, and Ms. Ellis said she was willing to be an interviewer now that there were targeted questions. She suggested showing photos to people during the interviews to elicit responses; everyone agreed that was a great idea. Ms. Carey and Ms. Ellis would send Mr. Schoefmann the photos and he would make a poster of them for the event.

Discussion ensued about the digital access to photos. Mr. Schoefmann suggested determining the best way to share media because the typical google drive is running out of space. He will likely try to start another one. Chair Powell thought it was worthy to use a part of the Commission's budget to buy a dedicated shared drive. Mr. Schoefmann is also talking to the GIS project consultant and would ask about that. Discussion ensued about sharing and buying a shared drive. Mr. Schoefmann would investigate.

Ms. Carey asked where Ann Eastman lives, and discussion ensued. Tim Grossi said he would be a good contributor. Vice Chair DeGidio said her husband was half Italian and this was very reminiscent of those stories. Chair Powell heard that all these families were traveling back and forth between Keene, NH, Quincy, MA and Ludlow, VT.

There was excitement amongst the Commission about these prospects. Chair Powell noted that Ms. Zerba might have exciting stories to share as well, and discussion ensued. Discussion ensued about a former small grocery store in City Hall run by Ms. Huston's family in City Hall.

- 6) **More Time – Heritage Website Updates**
- 7) **Next Meeting – December 14, 2022**

The next meeting is the presentation at 7:00 PM at the Historical Society.

8) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katrana Kibler, Minute Taker
November 16, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff
January 5, 2023