

RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, March 7, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Rye Town Hall & via Zoom

Commission Present: Chair Alex Herlihy, Peter White, David Choate, Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson, and Alternates Elizabeth Sanborn and Mae Bradshaw

I. Call to Order

Chair Herlihy called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Seating of Alternates

Alternate Elizabeth Sanborn was seated for Frank Lagana.

III. Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **February 1, 2024**

Motion by Peter White to accept the February 1, 2024 as written. Seconded by David Choate. All in favor.

IV. Business:

- **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer White reviewed the treasurer's report as of the end of February. The Commission has \$43,564 in its account. There are restricted funds for anything related to Town Hall of \$5,490. The amount of \$8,250 is identified for the Town Hall stairs, which was raised from the 2023 mailer, and another \$310 restricted for the gazebo. There is also \$18,245 restricted for town signs, which will cover four signs to be installed later in the spring of approximately \$10,000. There are unrestricted funds of \$19,292 of which \$8,025 is for the town stairs.

Treasurer White noted that the gazebo is being constructed by Jeffery Hines. The Commission gave him a \$6,000 deposit in December. The contract calls for a \$2,000 progress payment. There will be another payment due of \$2,000 after completion of the base and top for a total payment of \$10,000.

Chair Herlihy confirmed the gazebo project is on track.

Motion by Peter White to make a progress payment to Jeffrey Hines in the amount of \$2,000., of which \$310 will come from the restricted gazebo account and \$1,690 to come from the unrestricted Rye Heritage Fund Account.

Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.

- **Reappointments**

Chair Herlihy noted that David Choate, Mae Bradshaw, and Bev Giblin are up for reappointment this year. A recommendation letter from the chair has to be sent to the Select Board and each member must also submit a letter asking for reappointment.

Motion by Alex Herlihy to recommend to the Select Board the reappointment of David Choate, as a full member, and Mae Bradshaw, as an alternate, to the Heritage Commission. Seconded by Elizabeth Sanborn. All in favor.

Chair Herlihy will follow up with Bev Giblin to see if she will be staying on the Commission.

Member Choate noted that Elizabeth Sanborn's term is also up on the Demolition Review Committee.

Motion by David Choate to recommend to the Select Board that Elizabeth Sanborn be reappointed for a three-year term to the Demolition Review Committee. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.

- **Gazebo Project Update**

Treasurer White reported that Jeffrey Hines is almost done with the base. Arrangements are going to have to be made for Mr. Hines to get the base from the barn to the spot (location). Also, the location has to be prepared to accept the base.

There was discussion about where the gazebo should be located. Chair Herlihy spoke about Selectman Epperson's idea of locating the gazebos and monuments at the edge of the town parking lot, closest to the Town Hall.

Selectman Epperson pointed out that a Dig Safe was performed and it's an acceptable spot; however, the area has to be prepped.

Chair Herlihy commented that the gazebo should not move from its current location, until the permanent location is ready. At that time, the bottom and top of the gazebo would be reattached.

The Commission agreed.

Alternate Bradshaw expressed concerns with regard to the potential loss of critical parking that will be needed in the future when the second floor of the Town Hall is being used for meetings and events.

Selectman Epperson noted there is adequate parking and does not feel this area is critical for parking.

Chair Herlihy pointed out that this is a level spot, which is needed for the gazebo, with the least amount of site work.

Alternate Bradshaw noted that the concept was to make that a park area with walkways and benches, and to possibly have an outside music venue on some occasions in that park area. She understands wanting to get these things placed quickly; however, this is losing sight of using that space in a town-friendly way.

Chair Herlihy suggested the possibility of locating the monuments on the grass area closer to Washington Road, which is town owned land. He also suggested moving the war monument to this area.

Member Choate commented that he thinks Alternate Bradshaw is saying to look at the long-term solution, not just pick an area that is level and easier. He pointed out that what is really needed is a landscape architect.

There was some discussion about asking a landscape architect to help with the project. Alternate Bradshaw noted that the contractor's wife is a landscape expert and may be willing to help. It was agreed to ask Jeffrey Hines if Lisa Hines might be available to give some advice. Chair Herlihy will follow up with Mr. Hines.

- **Update on new Town Hall Subcommittee**

Chair Herlihy reported that Town Administrator Matt Scruton has posted the Town Hall Subcommittee on the Town's website, so people who are interested in serving on the subcommittee may inquire. The Town website has a page listed for all volunteer opportunities that are available.

- **Rye Advocates update**

Referring to the property at 237 Locke Road, Member Choate reported that the property owner has chosen an architect who is working on a final site design for the new house. The property owner is intending to submit for a building permit by the end of March, which will probably be issued in April or May. Member Choate noted that the Building Inspector cannot issue a building permit if there are two houses on the same lot. Member Choate pointed out that the existing house is going to be removed, so this could be tied to the certificate of occupancy. This would at least let the property owner get started on the project.

Member Choate continued that he has researched all town owned land and there seems to be three lots that are not restricted by conservation. The property owner has said that if a piece of land is found that can be given for this project, he would consider moving the house himself. Right now, almost everyone who has looked at the house has said to dismantle everything and sell it to someone who would have the house rebuilt. Ideally, the house would be picked up and moved some place in Rye. There is a property owner on Appledore Ave who would like to move the house intact to the property. This gentleman is currently talking to people who move houses about the costs. Member Choate noted there is also another person who is looking for a lot to possibly move the house to.

There was some discussion about the possibility of moving the house to a town owned parcel. Member Choate agreed to reach out to the Building Inspector to see what town owned lots may work.

There was discussion about the property owner seeking relief to allow two houses on one lot, until the new home is built.

- **Demo Review update**

Member Choate noted there were nondescript properties recently. There are a couple of 1950's properties coming up.

- **Historic Graveyard Subcommittee**

Chair Herlihy spoke about the need to update the historic graveyard information on the Heritage Commission page on the Town's website. He would like the subcommittee to research and organize the information.

- **Capital Reserve Fund**

Chair Herlihy commented that it seems appropriate for the Heritage Commission to create a justification for a certain dollar amount and go through the process to start an annual request to build a capital reserve fund for a significant expense that may come up in the future.

The Commission agreed to look into this idea further.

- **Review and update RHC website including tabs**

Chair Herlihy asked the members to review the Heritage Commission page on the Town's website for updating.

- **Neighborhood Historic Districts**

Member Choate spoke about the idea of creating neighborhood historic districts and the possibility of having a work session with the Planning Board to discuss this idea.

V. Other Business

- Next meeting: Thursday, April 4th, 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Bill Epperson to adjourn at 6:27 p.m. Seconded by Alex Herlihy. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted
Dyana F Ledger