

TOWN OF RYE HERITAGE COMMISSION

Thursday, April 4, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Rye Town Hall

Commission Members Present: Chair Alex Herlihy, Clerk Peter White, Frank Lagana, and Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson

I. Call to Order

Chair Herlihy called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

II. Seating of Alternates

None

III. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **March 7, 2024**

Motion by Peter White to approve the minutes of March 7, 2024 as presented. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

IV. Business:

a. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer White reported that the Commission has paid the second of three installments to Jeffrey Hines for \$2,000. There is a balance of \$2,000 due upon completion. He also reported that the Commission received another \$25 donation in March from the fundraiser. Those are the two transactions that transpired in the month of March. The Commission's account balance is in good shape.

Motion by Alex Herlihy to accept the Treasurer's report. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

b. Demo Review Committee appointment

Chair Herlihy noted that there cannot be a Demo Review Committee without a Heritage Commission. However, people who are on the Demo Review Committee do not have to be on the Heritage Commission. The Select Board's Secretary, Janice Ireland, recommended that the

Heritage Commission vote to reappoint Elizabeth Sanborn to Demo Review, so she doesn't have to wait.

Motion by Alex Herlihy to reappoint Elizabeth Sanborn to the Demo Review Committee. Seconded by Frank Lagana. All in favor.

c. Status of RHC re-appointments by Select Board

Chair Herlihy stated that due to the recent decision made by the Select Board with regard to the policy for commissions, there will be a thirty-day period for other people to apply for a seat on the commission when a term has expired. This is to encourage people to step up and show their interest. It's assumed that in May, the Select Board will reappoint David Choate and Elizabeth Sanborn whose terms have expired. He pointed out that the Heritage Commission can continue to meet because they have a quorum. He also pointed out that Bev Giblin would like to request to move from a regular member to an alternate. This means there will be one vacancy in the regular membership.

d. Gazebo update

Chair Herlihy reported that he talked to Jeff Hines. Mr. Hines has been working with DPW to make an adjustment to the top of the gazebo, so it will be easier to lift it up into place. Mr. Hines also said that when he is done with his work, in order to not tie up the barn, the gazebo pieces can be taken out and put in a location that is accessible, but not in anyone's way. The intent is to get the gazebo out of the Goss Barn, so that area can be used for other purposes.

Treasurer White noted that he and Chair Herlihy met with Library Trustee Victor Azzi at the barn to look at the gazebo base. Then they went to the Library Common. They mapped out a place at the intersection of Old Parish Road and the library driveway as a potential site for the gazebo. Mr. Azzi was asked to pitch the idea to the Library Trustees. Treasurer White commented that Mr. Azzi seemed optimistic about what he saw. In light of the election, the first meeting of the Library Trustees was going to be an organizational meeting. Mr. Azzi said that he would put this on the docket for the second meeting and would present the proposed location on the Library Common. Treasurer White commented that he will email Victor Azzi about being on the agenda for their next meeting.

Member Lagana asked if the proposed location adjacent to the Town Hall is still an option.

Chair Herlihy explained they've moved beyond that to make it easier by having it go to a flat area that already exists. That's why the back corner of the Library Commission is now being proposed.

There was a brief discussion about whether the DPW would be able to prepare the site for the gazebo with crushed stone. Selectman Epperson didn't think this would be an issue; however, he will follow up with DPW Director Jason Rucker.

Referring to the base of the gazebo, Chair Herlihy commented that there may need to be a row of pressure treated boards, so when it's sitting on the ground it's protected from moisture. In regard to the color of the gazebo, Chair Herlihy pointed out that the Commission will decide what will be the best color. However, he's not sure if Mr. Hines has been contracted to do the staining.

There was some discussion about the color. It was noted by Chair Herlihy that stain can come in the same colors as paint. It was also noted that it will probably be a colonial color. It was suggested by Selectman Epperson that they speak with the Library about whether they have a preference.

e. Discuss request for annual funding of Rye Advocates website

Chair Herlihy explained that the Rye Advocates is not a subcommittee, as they are a separate committee. There is a term for this type of committee, which is "a community organization without financial standing," as it is not a 501.3c. He continued that Rye Advocates emerged from the non-profit Historical Society. It was never really feasible for the Heritage Commission to handle the group because of its size. That's why Rye Advocates was created about four years ago by people from this Commission, various other boards, and others. Chair Herlihy continued that he is proposing \$356 for the first year for funding of a proposed website for Rye Advocates. He would like to fund the website from the Heritage Commission's funds for one year. He feels it's appropriate for the Heritage Commission to make a one-time contribution to something that is so much a part of the Commission's environment, which will get the website up and running.

Motion by Alex Herlihy to fund the Rye Advocates' website, for one year only, in the amount of \$356 to come from the Heritage Commission's unrestricted funds. Seconded by Bill Epperson.

All in favor.

f. Rye Advocates update

Chair Herlihy reported that the "free" house at 237 Locke Road has been taken and is currently being dismantled. A New Hampshire contractor came forward who knows how to dismantle old houses. The contractor will be moving the house to a piece of land in Southern New Hampshire.

g. Demo Review updated

Chair Herlihy noted that there is word that the East School, a stone building that has been a private home since 1934 and was built in 1896, is going on the market (281 Brackett Road). He wrote a letter to the homeowners acknowledging the home's history. He asked the homeowners if they would consider putting in an anti-demolition clause in order to save the building. He also asked the homeowners to tell their realtor about the history of the property.

h. Historic Signage update

Treasurer White reported that four signs are in development for the Cemetery; Coast Guard (lifesaving station and shipwreck); fishing; and schools. The signs have been paid for through fundraising and are in the final stages of design. It's anticipated that the signs will be ready the middle of May.

i. Historic Graveyard Committee update

Members of the Historic Graveyard Committee: Patty Smith; Lydia Tilsley; Tom Sanderson; and Alex Herlihy. Patty Smith and Lydia Tilsley have already started work on the graveyards.

j. RHC website update

Chair Herlihy asked the members to look at the Heritage Commission's website for updates, accuracy, and ease of access, in order to make some updates.

k. Volunteers needed for Memorial Day refreshments

Alternate Bradshaw is not able to attend this year's Memorial Day Celebration to take care of the refreshment table that the Heritage Commission does every year. Volunteers are needed to pick up the refreshments and man the table. This will be discussed again at the May meeting.

V. Other Business

- The "abandoned overgrown" home on Grove Road at Fern Avenue has been purchased. The new owner is cleaning up the property.
- Treasurer White would like the Commission to consider engaging Mr. Hines to do one set of historic stairs at the Town Hall, if they are happy with the work on the gazebo. Treasurer White noted that the Commission raised \$8,000 for the stairs and one set could be done. He thinks it's important for the Commission to use the money and show results by executing the project.
The Commission agreed this is a good idea and should be considered.

Adjournment

Motion by Peter White to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger