

ASHLAND HERITAGE COMMISSION

MARCH 21, 2017

Members Present: Maher, MacLeod, DeWolfe, Sharps, Ruell

Others Present: Tejasinha Sivalingam

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. in the Fire Station.

Minutes. On a motion by MacLeod, seconded by DeWolfe, it was voted to approve the December 13 minutes as written. On a motion by DeWolfe, seconded by Sharps, it was voted to approve the January 10 minutes with one change, as the date of the next meeting should have been March 21.

Finances. The balance in the Fourth of July account is \$13,943, with one bill from Veggie Art Girl for buttons still outstanding. The method of paying bills and the information required was discussed.

Town Hall. The article on the Town Hall Planning Study failed by 15 votes, with 33 voters not voting on the article. The difficulty of getting the right information to the voters was discussed. Maher noted that there were some detractors speaking against the proposal. She said that the close vote showed that it was still a viable proposal. Ruell suggested an open house so that voters could tour the building, noting that few get beyond the counter. Maher noted that very few people have seen the third floor. She pointed out that security would be an issue at an open house. MacLeod suggested a virtual tour that could be placed on-line and shown at a Selectmen's meeting. Maher suggested a Meredith Village Savings Bank grant application. The LCHIP grant was reviewed. The deadline for completing the study is December 31, 2018. The matching money has to be raised before any LCHIP funds can be spent. Maher suggested getting other quotes for the work. Ruell reported that the Historical Society was considering doing a program on the Town Hall in September. The Commission was supportive of such a program. The research done in preparation for the program could probably be used for the in-kind match. The researchers should keep track of the dates, hours and nature of that research.

Town Buildings. Maher has been working on a survey of Town owned buildings. She still has to obtain information on their expenses, including maintenance costs. She would like to have a town wide conversation on the use of the buildings. She noted that the Town owned 50,000 square feet of space, with some 20,000 feet that could be office space, including the Scribner Memorial and the Whipple House. She felt that the Heritage Commission should lead that conversation, and felt that all the spaces should be considered for possible uses. Ruell pointed out the legal restrictions in the gifts of the Scribner and Whipple buildings. Maher and MacLeod responded that deeds and bequests can be changed. Ruell also pointed out that there are groups with vested interest in certain buildings. How to have this town wide conversation was discussed, with a forum or charette being suggested. Maher proposed that this town wide discussion be a project for the Commission, along with the Town Hall review.

Regional Heritage Commission Meeting. Maher, MacLeod and DeWolfe reported on the regional meeting of Heritage Commissions, noting that other Commissions face the same problems we do. The plan is to hold regional meetings three times per year.

Program. Ruell noted the need for a projector for the Hubka program in July. Options were discussed.

Barn Survey. The barn survey is waiting on Frank Stevens. Sharps will talk to him. Glenn Dion has given permission to include the old state barn. The types of barns or outbuildings that could be included were discussed.

150th Anniversary House Photos. The house photo project for the 2018 anniversary was reviewed. Residents will be asked to take photos of their homes with or without the occupants. Maher suggested both an electronic file and prints suitable for display. The ultimate goal would be to photograph all buildings in Ashland for display now and in the future. Ruell reported that the Historical Society is considering displaying all of its laminated and enlarged historic photos as part of the anniversary. MacLeod suggested that for some buildings, the historic photo could serve as the model for the contemporary

photo. On a motion by Maher, seconded by Sharps, it was voted that the Commission's project for the 150th Anniversary be the photography of all the buildings in Ashland.

Master Plan Update. The Planning Board has asked that the Heritage Commission work on updating Chapter 9, the Historic Resources chapter of the Master Plan. After a short discussion, it was voted, on a motion by Maher, seconded by DeWolfe, that every Commissioner review Chapter 9 and mark sections for changes before the next meeting.

Long Term Plans. Maher suggested the Commission develop long term plans and decide what to do in the next year, next three years and next five years, perhaps in the fall.

Conference. MacLeod reported on the April 29 conference sponsored by the Office of Energy and Planning in Concord, that includes workshops of interest to the Commission.

Next Meeting. It was agreed to meet at 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, in the Fire Station.

Whipple House. As the Selectmen have decided that they will make all decisions on changes to the Whipple House, it is unclear what responsibility the Commission now has. Sharps will ask the selectmen what will be the role of the Heritage Commission in the oversight of the Whipple House Museum?

Officers and Members. The terms of Ruell and probably MacLeod are now up. They were asked to submit their names to the selectmen for renewal of their appointments. The election of officers was also discussed, but no action was taken.

The meeting ended at about 5:45 p.m.

David Ruell
Recording Secretary