

ASHLAND HERITAGE COMMISSION

MARCH 9, 2016

Present: Maher (by phone), Ruell, Stevens, MacLeod (see below)

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

Commissioners On March 7, the selectmen voted to appoint Susan MacLeod as a member of the Heritage Commission, but the paperwork has not been completed and MacLeod has not been sworn in yet. Recruiting more members for the Commission was discussed.

Minutes On a motion by Maher, seconded by Stevens, it was voted to approve the minutes of the February 10 meeting with one correction, as only “One major check for the 2016 Fourth of July celebration has been written.”

E-mail Address The Commission's e-mail address on the town website has not yet been established.

Whipple House Reports A draft report of the Building Inspector's inspection of the Whipple House was e-mailed to members. The Town Administrator says that a final report is in the works. Ruell talked to the Fire Chief about an inspection of the museum portion of the building. Chief Heath is willing to do one when the weather is warmer. Maher wanted to know what the maximum occupancy of the building should be. At the Selectmen's meeting on March 7, Chairman DeWolfe suggested a joint meeting of the Selectmen, the Commission and the Historical Society to discuss the Whipple House. The consensus was that the Fire Chief's inspection should be completed before such a meeting. (Later in the meeting, the valuations of the Whipple House and its contents, as stated in the Town Report, were questioned.)

Finances Stevens reported that he had tried to turn over the \$11 donated at the February meeting to the Town Treasurer. But, she had not yet set up an account for the Heritage Fund, and wanted to wait until after the town

election to establish the account. So, he returned the \$11 to the donors. The town operating budget was approved at the March 8 election. Maher reported that fundraising appeals from the Fourth of July Committee have been sent out. The question was whether the funds should go directly from the Committee to the Town Treasurer or should go through the Commission's finance officer. Stevens felt that it would be quicker for the money to go directly from the Committee to the Town Treasurer, as long as proper records were kept of the transfers.

Authority to Accept Donations The Commission has no document stating the Selectmen's approval of the Commission's ability to accept gifts. MacLeod will get a copy of the Selectmen's minutes recording that vote and place it in the Commission files.

Financial Flow Review Maher sent a copy of the proposed financial flow to the Town Treasurer, but has received no response. The issue will be pursued at a future meeting.

Northern Pass and Pemi Bridges Ruell e-mailed to the Commissioners a draft letter on the National Register eligibility of the railroad and highway bridges over the Pemi, and the impact of the Northern Pass project on them. The letter and the question of who to send it to were discussed. On a motion by Maher, seconded by Stevens, it was voted to send the letter to the Department of Energy and the Site Evaluation Committee, with copies to the NH Division of Historic Resources and the NH Preservation Alliance.

Barn Survey Stevens will attend a workshop on barn surveys on April 9 in Warner and will report back at the April meeting.

Historic Buildings Inventory The Master Plan calls for expanding the historic buildings inventory. The barn survey would add to the inventory. Maher suggested concentrating on the historic buildings owned by the Town, particularly the Town Hall. The Scribner (Library) building, Booster Clubhouse, Bandstand and the covered bridge were also mentioned. Maher suggested treating the Town Hall the same as the Whipple House.

Other Organizations Maher wanted to wait on asking other organizations to come under the auspices of the Commission, until we see how the change works with the Fourth of July Committee. The Community Council and Christmas Night in particular were discussed.

Program N.H. Humanities has approved the Commission's application for the program "On This Spot Once Stood..." on August 11 at the Railroad Station. Ruell suggested discussing publicity and refreshments in June and/or July.

Historic Commission Files Ruell contacted Bob Hicks who made copies of the Historic Commission files on his computer. MacLeod had copied all the reports of the Historic Commission in the Town Reports, noting that there were no reports in several years. MacLeod will place all these materials in the Heritage Commission files.

Reuben Whitten Maher outlined the plans for the 200th anniversary of the Year Without A Summer and Whitten's generosity. The first event is an ice cream social on Sunday, June 5. The theme of the 4th of July parade will be the Year Without A Summer. (The Historical Society will have a Whitten tour/ program in July.) The Whitten Wheat Festival, with the harvesting of the small wheat field, will be on August 27. The Garden Club will be planting light blue and silver flowers and foliage throughout the town. Local artists are being asked to make snowflakes of various sizes and shapes. 150 press releases have been sent various media throughout the country. Several stories have appeared or will appear, including one in Early American Life. The Whitten House restoration continues with the restoration of the window frames and sash. The clapboards will be restored soon. The building will have to be painted. The exterior door is a question. Maher was concerned about the tree growing out of Reuben Whitten's grave in the Whitten cemetery, which she feels should be removed.

On a motion by Stevens, seconded by Ruell, it was voted to adjourn at 5:10 p.m.

David Ruell, Recording Secretary