

ASHLAND HERITAGE COMMISSION

DECEMBER 13, 2016

Members present: Maher, MacLeod, Ruell, Sharps, DeWolfe
Others present: Tejasinha Sivalingam

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. in the Fire Station.

Minutes, On a motion by MacLeod, seconded by Sharps, it was voted to approve the minutes of November 1 as presented.

Finances. The Fourth of July Committee recently transferred \$6500 to the Heritage Fund, raising the Fourth of July account in the Fund to approximately \$27,943. On a motion by Ruell, seconded by Sharps, it was voted to reimburse the three Commissioners (MacLeod, Maher and DeWolfe) who attended the LCHIP program and luncheon for their fees and the driver (MacLeod) for the gasoline used.

LCHIP Town Hall Grant. The Town was awarded a grant of up to \$18,250 for the assessment of the Town Hall. Maher thanked MacLeod for all her work preparing the successful application. The grant must be matched by Town funds or in kind work by volunteers. MacLeod noted that the Town Administrator was looking for templates for the warrant article for the matching funds. The article must ask for the full amount to be spent, including the grant. The form accepting the grant must be signed by a “duly authorized representative”. The consensus was that the Selectmen had to authorize the signing. So, Maher was to bring the form to the Selectmen's meeting the next day. She noted that the selectmen and the town administrator will have to write the warrant article. MacLeod said that the work could begin after the vote of the town in March. Maher felt that we should make contacts before the vote is taken. MacLeod noted that Chris Williams suggested hiring a structural engineer and talking with the Town Administrator. By general consensus, the Commission agreed that we should meet with Williams, a structural engineer of his suggestion, and the Town

Administrator in January or February. Publicity of the project was discussed. Maher and MacLeod will work on a one page sheet on the Town Hall assessment project. Maher suggested an inspection of the Town Hall by the Fire Chief.

Whipple House. On the Moose Plate grant for the Whipple House chimney, Ruell explained that the Historical Society was still waiting for the chimney contractor to revise his estimate and answer the questions of the review board to complete the grant process. The Selectmen decided that they would approve alterations made to the Whipple House by the Society. They approved the installation of a fan in the bathroom apartment and a railing in the shed, as well as giving general permission to cut down dead trees. The Society has cut down two of the three dead trees on the Baptist Church boundary. Maher explained that no changes were made in the lease between the Town and the Historical Society, which will continue for another year.

Fourth of July. Maher noted three issues involving the Fourth of July, the question of what setup the Fourth of July Committee will act under, the proposed 2017 budget, and the form for requesting payment of checks. The Committee did submit a request for a \$14,000 check to Atlas Pyrotechnics for the 2017 fireworks. On a motion by MacLeod, seconded by DeWolfe, it was voted to approve the \$14,000 fireworks check. Masher suggested a number of changes to the check request form, which was prepared by the Fourth of July Committee. There was a discussion on whether to revise the form before signing the request. Maher and Ruell agreed to sign the form with two changes made by Maher in the title changing "Committee" to "Commission" and adding "Heritage Fund". Maher will work on revising the form and consult with the Town Treasurer. The commissioners reviewed the proposed budget, with Maher answering their questions. Ruell suggested adding a General Expenses line for miscellaneous costs. Maher noted some legal concerns as to whether the Fourth of July Committee should be a separate town committee appointed by the selectmen or a a committee acting under the Heritage Commission. Legal advice is now being sought from the town attorney on that issue. Another option was for the Fourth of July Committee to continue operating under the AARA. No more money is likely

to be spent before May or June, so there is time to deal with the question. The main concerns are to provide the committee members and Fourth of July volunteers with appropriate liability insurance and to handle the collection and dispersal of the holiday event funds in a legally correct manner. On a motion by Maher, seconded by Sharps, it was voted to approve the proposed Fourth of July Budget, with the addition of \$200 for General Expenses. The Fourth of July Committee has withdrawn its request for a \$5000 appropriation from the Town, as there are sufficient funds in hand for the 2017 celebration. The Committee remains concerned about the decline in fundraising and the rise in costs, particularly of fireworks, which may lead to future deficits.

Town Wide Yard Sale. Ruell explained that the AARA does not want to sponsor the 2017 Town Wide Yard Sale, so the event would lose its liability insurance. Maher pointed out that same legal concerns raised about the Fourth of July volunteers would apply to the Town Wide Yard Sale volunteers, whether they should be under the auspices of the Heritage Commission or a separate committee appointed directly by the Selectmen, so action will have to wait until that legal issue is resolved. DeWolfe raised the issue of the effect of all these subsidiary functions on the Heritage Commission, whether they will take up too much of the Commission's time and detract from its ability to raise funds for its own efforts in dealing with Ashland's historic buildings.

Signage. Maher explained that the selectmen wanted the Commission to establish the process for the review of proposed municipal signs and to create a consistent signage protocol. Both the 150th Anniversary Committee and the Economic Development Committee want to erect welcoming signs. The relationship of the municipal signage protocol to the zoning ordinance was discussed. The issue will be taken up at future meetings.

Northern Pass. The consultant working on the potential Ashland village historic district for the historical review of the Northern Pass project had asked to meet with the commission, but was unable to attend the meeting. Ruell explained that the historical consultants were looking at all potential

historic buildings and districts within 1 ½ miles of the Northern Pass line to determine their eligibility for the National Register. This consultant had found that there was a potential historic district in the village and would work out the boundary of such a district. Another consultant was assigned to do a form on Green Grove Cemetery. The next step will be to determine the impact of the power line on those eligible properties, presumably just those structures that will have a view of the power line and its towers. The Commission was interested in seeing the consultants' work products.

Barn Survey. There was a brief discussion of the possibility of working on the barn survey in 2017.

On a motion by Sharps, seconded by DeWolfe, it was voted to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

David Ruell, Recording Secretary