

FINAL

**LEBANON HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING ROOM 3, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
6:00PM, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 11, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicole Ford Burley (Chair and City Historian), Matt Smith (Vice Chair), Devin Wilkie (City Council Rep)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeremy Rutter (Planning Board Rep.), Karen Zook (Alt. Council Rep)

STAFF PRESENT: Nate Reichert (Director of Planning & Development/Zoning Admin)
Lebanon Fire Chief James Wheatley, Asst Fire Chief Jeff Libbey

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. John Adams (REMOTE) and Mr. Robert Robicsek (REMOTE)
Architects from Lavallee Brensinger Architects

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ford Burley called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 13, 2023

Amendments: Page 3, Line 27: change “the flowers were planted by members of the Conservation Commission” to “the landscape was modeled on historic gardens”

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wilkie to approve the September 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes as amended. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Smith.

**** The Vote on the Motion was approved (3-0).***

3. PUBLIC REVIEW

A. None

4. STUDY ITEMS

A. Lebanon Firehouse Project

Chief Wheatley said the Heritage Commission and tradition are very important to the Fire Department. He said they value historic fire houses, but Lebanon’s fire house needs many improvements and cannot be preserved.

Mr. Bob Robicsek and Mr. John Adams gave an overview of the Lebanon Fire Station renovation project plan, which was included in the meeting’s agenda packet. They noted that this initial design has been presented to the Lebanon City Council.

They said the plan, which is still in the design phase, includes several important modernizations:

- More room between the street and the front of the apparatus bays
- Improved height for the apparatus area
- Improved living and working conditions for staff
- ADA access will be added
- More windows to let in more natural light
- Solar panels proposed to be installed on the roof

but will still be in keeping with the look and feel of the historic fire station and the other buildings around the Green. They said exterior brick used for the new building will be reminiscent of the brick on the existing structure.

Chief Wheatley said the ceiling in the current apparatus area is extremely low and very close to the top of the fire vehicles. He also said the current sleeping quarters and office are close to the apparatus area and exhaust fumes go into those areas, which is not a healthy environment for staff.

Chair Ford Burley said she hates to see any historic building lost but this is such a practical need. Mr. Smith said he appreciates that the plan fits into the historic district.

The group discussed the possibility of recycling elements of the existing building in the new design. Mr. Robicsek said the brick would be reused in a DPW project. Chief Wheatley said they are working to include the large granite block sign from the existing building into the new design.

Chief Wheatley said once the design has been finalized, it will be presented again to the Heritage Commission for final approval.

Mr. Robicsek and Mr. Adams left the meeting at 6:29pm.

Mr. Reichert confirmed that the fire station is within the Historic District in Lebanon.

B. Cultural Heritage Emergency Preparedness

Chair Ford Burley told Chief Wheatley that the Commission would like to create a plan to safeguard Lebanon's cultural resources and buildings in the event of a disaster.

Chief Wheatley said the fire team has developed a pre-plan database with information for high-risk structures in Lebanon in case of fire.

He suggested the Commission could do the following:

1. Identify the sites in Lebanon that should be included in a disaster-preparedness plan.
2. Identify the buildings or items at the sites that are historically significant.
3. Work with Lebanon fire staff to develop emergency response plans based on the sites' and items' specific needs.

Chief Wheatley said they can add the historic buildings and inventory to the fire department's pre-plan database so they can prioritize those specific sites and items in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Reichert asked how long it would take to develop a plan for the top five historically significant sites. Chief Wheatley said the fire department staff would arrange a time to walk through each site, enter the historically significant information into the database, and get a draft back to the Heritage Commission. He said the plan format is already in place, so it is a relatively quick turnaround. Mr. Reichert asked if other needed fire safety improvements would be identified by the fire department staff during the walk-throughs. Chief Wheatley said they could do a safety risk survey for each site.

Chair Ford Burley and Mr. Reichert discussed the Cultural Heritage Emergency Preparedness Conference they attended in September.

Chief Wheatley left the meeting at 6:46pm.

The group discussed how the sites and inventory should be prioritized. Mr. Wilkie said he believes that the fire department, in the event of a fire, would ensure the safety of human life first and then preserve the structure second. He said perhaps the Commission should focus on specific items as opposed to buildings when prioritizing items for preservation because the fire team will already be prioritizing the structures.

Mr. Smith also suggested that perhaps lower-profile buildings, such as the Carter Building or the Soldiers' Memorial Building, should be on the Commission's list because they may not already be on the fire department's high-risk building list.

Chair Ford Burley said she will add the topic of building an inventory of historic sites and items to the Heritage Commission's next meeting agenda and asked Committee members to start thinking about sites and items that should be considered. The group agreed to use an online shared document to brainstorm ideas.

C. Special Projects

JAM Indigenous History Video Preview

Chair Ford Burley said the video was not available for a preview at this meeting. She said JAM plans to get a preview copy to the members by October 18, and asked the members to review it and give any input/comments to her so she can get their feedback to JAM by October 23. She said JAM hopes to finalize the video by the start of November.

D. Dana House

Chair Ford Burley said a tour has been planned for November 9 at 9:00am, led by DPW, which will include Mr. Andrew Cushing of the NH Preservation Alliance. Chair Ford Burley said Mr. Cushing has expressed interest in helping Lebanon and may provide some suggestions for possible rehabilitation options for Dana House.

Mr. Reichert said the existing ramp has structural issues and cannot be used as an ADA accessible ramp. He said there needs to be a discussion about whether it should be preserved or removed.

Chair Ford Burley said she's been thinking about how the Dana House could be made into residential space. She said, once a plan has been developed, they would need to create two plans in order to apply for funding for projects:

- Qualified Preservation Plan (developed by a consultant)
- Historic Building Assessment

She also said there's a Robert Leavitt Donation for the Dana House, which is to be used for rehabilitation. Mr. Reichert said he will research where the funds are and how much may still be available.

E. Education

No update

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Upcoming Historical/Heritage Events

- **Lebanon Covered Bridges Presentation**
Chair Ford Burley reminded the group that the Lebanon Historical Society will host a talk on Lebanon's Covered Bridges on October 28 at 1pm at the Kilton Library.
- **Lebanon Book Publication & Events**
Chair Ford Burley said there was a book signing at Barnes & Noble in West Lebanon last weekend for the Lebanon book she had written.

Chair Ford Burley said she had written an article in the Lebanon Times about the 1923 Fire in Lebanon. She said the Lebanon Times is considering adding a regular History of Lebanon column. She also said she gave a lecture to the Lebanon's Women's Club.

Chair Ford Burley said she will need to present the Quarterly Report to the City Council by the end of October. The group agreed the following items that occurred in August and September should be included in the report:

- The new book, **Lebanon**, published in September
- The **Cultural Heritage Emergency Preparedness** – Mr. Reichert suggested Chair ask the Council members to provide their ideas for buildings or items
- Work done by DPW on Dana House

Mr. Reichert said the landmark designation outreach letter is in progress. He also reported that a new Assistant Planner is currently going through the on-boarding process and should start during

the first week of November. He said he believes she will be able to attend the next Heritage Commission meeting.

6. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- A. List of Historically Significant Buildings and Items to Include in a Cultural Heritage Emergency Preparedness Plan**
- B. Lebanon Master Plan, Chapter 11 (Heritage) Implementation**
- C. Lebanon HC Design Guidelines Review and Update**

8. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. Smith to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkie.

** The vote on the Motion was approved (3-0).*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paula Roux
Recording Secretary