

FINAL

LEBANON HERITAGE COMMISSION MEETING ROOM 1, CITY HALL OR REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM 6:00PM, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicole Ford Burley (Chair and City Historian), Matt Smith (Vice Chair), Jeremy Rutter (Planning Board Rep.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Devin Wilkie (City Council Rep), Karen Zook (Alt. Council Rep)

STAFF PRESENT: Catheryn Hembree (Associate Planner, Planning Department)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ford Burley called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. She reviewed the City's meeting in-person and REMOTE attendance policies and procedures.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A MOTION was made by Jeremy Rutter to nominate Nicole Ford Burley as Chair of the Heritage Commission. The Motion was seconded by Matt Smith.

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

A MOTION was made by Jeremy Rutter to nominate Matthew Smith as Vice Chair of the Heritage Commission. The Motion was seconded by Nicole Ford Burley.

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 13, 2023

Amendments: Page 3 Line 6: Change "1944" to "1924"

Page 4 Line 19: Change "compete" to "complete"

A MOTION was made by Jeremy Rutter to approve the December 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes as amended. The Motion was seconded by Matt Smith.

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

4. Public Review

None

5. Study Items

A. Landmark 2024 Designations

Chair Ford Burley said three residents have approached her about getting landmark designations for their homes:

- 10 Great Brook Road – 18th century residence that's very well preserved
- 250 Meriden Road – former Hough-district one-room schoolhouse converted to a residence
- 44 Bank Street – owner has a lot of history about the house that can be added to the application. Chair Ford Burley said she needs to contact the owner again to follow up on this request

Chair Ford Burley said the owner of the 250 Meriden Road property had retracted their request for designation because they were not sure if they would retain ownership. Chair Ford Burley said she reminded them that this is not a regulatory issue, and they don't need to own the property. She said they gave the approval to once again move forward with the Landmark Designation process for the home.

Chair Ford Burley said all three properties are great candidates for Landmark Designation. Mr. Smith said he's excited about the interest from the community, and said the committee could also nominate other buildings, like Rogers House, that are not residential homes.

Mr. Rutter noted that, given the recent focus on the scarcity of housing in the area, it might be a good time to give Rogers House a plaque. Chair Ford Burley said Rogers House is owned by the Lebanon Housing Authority.

Chair Ford Burley said the City currently has seven plaques on hand, so awarding three or four plaques to start this year is a good target number. She said she would start doing some research on those properties before the next meeting. She said the Heritage Commission would review the history of the properties before voting to give them Landmark Designation. Mr. Rutter suggested that the manner in which the Commission was made aware of these properties should be shared with the community, on the Mall kiosk or on the City's website, to encourage others in the City to also come forward to seek Landmark Designation for their own homes.

Next Steps

Chair Ford Burley said, in the past, she sent letters to qualifying candidates to respond with feedback within a certain amount of time (30 days or so) and then the plaques were awarded at the next City Council meeting. Ms. Hembree confirmed that, if the Commission sent the letters and reviewed any feedback in its March meeting, that the plaques could be awarded at the first City Council meeting in April. Chair Ford Burley said she would bring the historical information she found on the homes to the next meeting. Ms. Hembree said she would work on the letters to the candidates.

The group talked about the three candidate homes. Chair Ford Burley said she toured the 10 Great Brook Road property and said it is remarkable. She said there is an engraving in the kitchen with the year 1786 and many other beautiful historic features.

Chair Ford Burley told the Commission that she accessed the online map via the QR code currently displayed in the Mall kiosk and she noted that the map has been viewed more than 700 times.

B. Mural Depicting Lebanon History

Ms. Hembree said she spoke with Lebanon Recreation, Parks, and Arts Director Paul Coats about the Heritage Commission's interest in adding artwork that highlights the City's history to the mural being painted in the tunnel. She said he said the Arts & Culture Committee is overseeing the mural design, and suggested the Heritage Commission members get on the Arts & Culture Committee's next agenda to share their ideas about the mural. Chair Ford Burley said she did not have a concept or artist in mind for the artwork. Mr. Rutter suggested several elements of Lebanon's history that could be appropriate for the tunnel art:

- Indigenous People's history, such as what was highlighted in the recently produced JAM Ndakinna video
- Railroad
- Mills

Chair Ford Burley said she'd like to talk with Mr. Wilkie at the next meeting because he initiated the idea with the Heritage Commission, and he is also a member of the Arts & Culture Committee.

C. Emergency Preparedness Inventory

Chair Ford Burley said this should be reviewed when Mr. Wilkie was present at the meeting, since he had so much input in the original list/document. She said it would be discussed at the next meeting.

D. Priorities for 2024/Review Items on Strategic Plan

Ms. Hembree shared a copy of the items in the Strategic Plan that involve the Heritage Commission. She said the first one is "Install historical markers along the Mascoma River Greenway and the Northern Rail Trail." She said the Commission should decide what the signs would say and how they would be designed.

Chair Ford Burley discussed the working group that had been assembled some time ago to create a test sign. She said a designer was hired, funded by the National Park Service, who developed the test sign. She said, based on that test sign, a series of signs would be installed all the way into Westboro Yard and up to River Park. She said she did not know whatever happened to the rest of the signs or if they were created. Ms. Hembree said she would look into the status of the project and bring her findings to the next meeting.

Mr. Rutter said River Park and the area that runs along the river has been given to the City and is administered by the Friends of River Park group. He said it might be a good idea to get in touch with that group and find out who their contact person is for the signs. Mr. Smith said he loved the idea of a unified theme and approach to all the signage. He said he really is interested in signage along the Greenway and the Rail Trail because it sees so much pedestrian traffic.

- **Start Master Plan Chapter Update in the Fall**

Ms. Hembree said another major initiative for 2024 is to update the Historical Resources chapter of the City's Master Plan. She said the Heritage Commission will spearhead that initiative, beginning in August or September of this year. She said once the CLG grant consultant is finished, they will focus on this project.

Chair Ford Burley brought up another item on the Strategic Plan: "Enhancing tourism opportunities." She said the signage could help with that effort. The group discussed possibly adding a sign to Colburn Park that acknowledges the historic district.

Mr. Rutter said this would be another good use for a map, with items like covered bridges and mills identified, which has been discussed in the past. Chair Ford Burley said the City's GIS map might be a good starting point to create that kind of map. The group agreed that it would be great if the GIS map included designated landmark properties, historic mills, covered bridges, etc. They agreed the GIS map is a great tool but can be less than user-friendly. Mr. Smith asked if Mark Goodwin, who is the administrator of the GIS map for the City, would meet with the Commission and discuss how to use the GIS map and its features. Ms. Hembree said she would ask him.

E. Mall Kiosk Display and Historic District Walking Tour

Chair Ford Burley added this item as **Study Item E**, which was not on the agenda included in the meeting materials.

Ms. Hembree shared copies of the walking tour map she created, which includes many buildings in the historic district. The group discussed how to add photos and notes about each building along the map. Ms. Hembree said she could add some West Lebanon properties not included in historic districts right now, such as Maple Street and Crafts Ave, to bring about awareness that these could be included in historic districts in the future. Chair Ford Burley said she has photos/postcards from years ago of historic buildings. Mr. Rutter suggested maps that show "Before" and "After" the fires that have occurred in Lebanon. The group agreed that it would be beneficial to add "Then" and "Now" photos of historic sites to the kiosk display.

Next Steps

Ms. Hembree said she can add the historic information (provided by the Commission members) to the walking tour map. Chair Ford Burley said she will collect historic images and let that be the beginning of determining which buildings/areas to highlight, and then the Commission can fill in what might be missing.

6. Other Business

A. CLG Grant Update

Ms. Hembree said Hartgen Archeological Associates, led by Brian Knight, has been selected to work on Phase 2 of the CLG grant project. She said the consultant is currently reviewing the contract. She said the firm is based in N.Y., but Mr. Knight comes from White River Junction. She said the consultant is planning to attend the

March Heritage Commission meeting to meet everyone. She said the main role of the consultant is to expand the Colburn Park Historic District. She said she would share the consultant's proposal materials with the group via email.

7. Open to the Public

No members of the public were present.

8. Future Agenda Items

The group discussed the City Manager's Ethics Training presentation, which is scheduled for next month's meeting. Mr. Smith said he heard it is about 10 minutes long.

The group discussed the following possible future agenda items:

- Signage on Greenway and Rail Trail
- Recruitment of more Heritage Commission members (especially younger members) – Mr. Smith suggested a shorter term for high school students who may have an interest in Heritage Commission activities. The group discussed how a shortage of members is a problem for many City committees.

Mr. Rutter asked if Chair Ford Burley had been informed that the Lebanon Opera House Site Plan review of its proposed lighting plan had been taken off the Planning Board Agenda for last meeting. He noted that the Heritage Commission had been told the site plan would be reviewed by the Planning Board but then it was decided that it was not in the purview of the Planning Board. Mr. Rutter said communication could be better when these kinds of situations occur.

Mr. Rutter said it was mentioned at the Planning Board meeting that the City Council could be asked for help with finding new members. The group discussed other constituencies that may be interested in joining the Heritage Commission, such as the Historical Society and people with homes designated as historic landmarks.

The group discussed ways to publicize and raise awareness about the Heritage Commission to attract new members. Mr. Rutter suggested the Commission could create and share a periodic newsletter about its activities. Chair Ford Burley mentioned that the Lebanon Times is considering a recurring column about the history of Lebanon. Ms. Hembree said the town she used to work for sent yearly postcards to every household in each historic district.

- Regular Report of Planning Board Activity (Mr. Rutter would present)

Other future agenda items mentioned during the meeting:

- Mural Depicting Lebanon History
- Emergency Preparedness Inventory
- Strategic Plan Items Related to Heritage Commission

Chair Ford Burley noted that the Historical Society is having its first online meeting of the year on Monday, January 15 at 7pm.

Mr. Rutter asked if the NH Archeological Society has any historical connections in other towns. Chair Ford Burley said it would be beneficial to be more connected to the NH Archaeological Society and its activities.

9. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Jeremy Rutter to adjourn the meeting at 7:37pm. The Motion was seconded by Matt Smith.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paula Roux
Recording Secretary