

DECEMBER 1 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

The public informational meeting regarding the proposed National Historic Register District was held at the Enfield Community Building on December first at 7 PM. Members of the Heritage Commission attending, in addition to the guest speaker, Peter Michaud, were Marjorie Carr, Suzanne Hinman, Celie Aubeiro, Paul Mirski, and Meredith Smith, Chair.

Meredith Smith opened the meeting, giving a brief history of how the proposed National Register District came about. Paul Mirski then followed with an overview of the benefits, especially from a tax standpoint, of such a district. Peter Michaud, (the person in charge of National Register applications) from NH Historic Resources spoke about the process of becoming a National Register District and provided a hand-out to the roughly thirty people attending. He then opened the meeting up to questions from the public attending the meeting. Two people seemed adamantly opposed to the District, voicing their concerns of “government takeover and more regulations and adding another layer of zoning”. They also stated that they like Enfield just the way it is and did not want it to change. Mr. Michaud and Mr. Mirski attempted to address their concerns, emphasizing that the Register was in no way any sort of zoning or regulation and that property owners within a National Register District were free to do as they wished with their property. Another attendee voiced concern that because her property was not commercial, she could not take advantage of the 20% federal tax credit. Mr. Michaud suggested that when a property was sold, the historic designation might be helpful and that the historic district designation was an honor, reserved for properties the Dept. of the Interior regarded as worthy of national significance. Overall, with the exception of these three people, all seemed to be in favor of the District. The overriding concern appeared to be fear that a National Register District would raise property taxes within the district. Mr. Michaud and Mr. Mirski reassured the audience that only when properties (either in or out of an historic district) are improved and upgraded does the tax assessment go up. Several people asked if the research concerning their properties would be available to them before the application is submitted in January. Mr. Michaud will send the town a copy of the draft application, including the detailed research information, which will be made available to the public at the Enfield Library. Property owners who would like to review the map of the proposed historic district were reminded that a large map of the proposed district is available at the town offices. There were several questions asked which the Heritage Commission will attempt to answer in the near future. The meeting was adjourned shortly after nine PM.

QUESTIONS TO BE RESOLVED

- What is the tax assessor’s opinion as to whether the property assessments will or will not be affected by the creation of an historic district?
- How many (roughly) of the properties within the district are commercial?
- What is the opinion of the Planning board regarding the proposed district and do they approve?
- Is the Heritage Commission working with/cooperating with other town committees?