

Historical Preservation Committee

Town of Gorham, Maine

Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2014 5:00p.m.

Committee members present: Councilor Bruce Roullard (Chair), Town Manager David Cole, Janice Labrecque, Janet Adams, Marla Stelk.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2014 Historical Preservation Committee meeting.

Bruce handed out the Guidelines for the Certified Local Government Program in Maine and a National Register Bulletin document titled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." The Maine Historical Preservation Commission designations are guided by what the National Register bulletin has listed for evaluation of listings. The MHPC does not maintain its own formal list of criteria.

The committee read through the four basic criteria (A-D) and agreed that it would be best to follow the MHPC example and rely on the National Register criteria. Dave suggested that we use 50 yrs + as a starting point for listings – but must have other characteristics as well. Janice asked what if its not 50 years old by located on an historic site. Bruce said that it would be a possibility depending on other criteria.

The committee discussed how they would use the bulletin to evaluate a property. Marla suggested that the committee create a checklist to start with – assuming that the committee will still maintain the right to make final decisions on eligibility – as a way to provide some sort of basic guidelines for the community and the committee. Dave commented that a checklist would need to allow for weighting of certain features/characteristics. Bruce suggested that we adopt the National Register guidelines as a starting point and adopt it as a working document so we can perhaps customize it for Gorham.

Dave explained that the process would be to offer a proposed ordinance then a checklist would be the tool to enforce the ordinance. But we need to decide what happens as a result of the ordinance – what does it mean property owners? Bruce suggested that we provide incentives for property owners and not force compliance. Dave commented that at the last meeting with the Fire Chief that they learned there was a lot of latitude with historical homes in regard to code compliance so that could be an incentive. Bruce asked if someone maintains and does historically correct renovation could there be a credit on tax assessment? Dave explained that the town is not legally allowed to offer property tax relief incentives – that can only be done by the state. Towns can only use TIFFs as incentives but there may be state level tax credits available between the state and the home owner.

Bruce suggested that we could become a certified local government program. The program will be discussed at the workshop that Bruce and Marla are attending – they will report back.

Dave commented that we want to make sure that folks can't game the system – they can opt in (to get more flexible code enforcement) and then opt out but there would have to be a time period where they

have to wait for maybe 5 years before switching again. The committee unanimously agreed to use the National Register criteria as a starting point.

The committee then discussed tasks being done and tasks to be done. Bruce reported that Noah is working on new mission statement draft and Bruce will check in with him. The next historical society meeting is on Monday – Bruce asked Janice if she would ask them (and we'd be happy to pay) if someone could volunteer to pull out the cards on the house files and photo copy them so we can start our inventory. Janice commented that George does not like to have materials taken out of the building. Bruce suggested that we move the 4 file cabinets of info to the Town Offices so they would be secure and located in a warm dry location. Dave agreed to meet with George and Brenda to see if they would be agreeable to that idea. Janice commented that there is still a stack of files that need to get put into the system – Janet offered to help.

Bruce said he will check with the MHPC to see if they already have a checklist that we can use. Janet will work on what a checklist would look like – will do draft and send to David to send out to committee

Marla will send Janet Deb Andrew's number (Portland Historical Preservation Manager) so she can ask Deb A in Portland if they have a checklist and other working documents. Marla will also send examples of other small town historical preservation ordinances to Dave.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15pm.