



North Hampton Heritage Commission
Minutes for the Meeting
July 21, 2011

held at the Heritage Commission Conference Room, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Building

Present:

Carolyn Brooks, Treasurer & Acting Chair

Paul Cuetara, Member

Jane Currivan, Member

Donna Etela, Member

Cynthia Swank, Alternate

Jim Maggione, Select Board Representative (arrived 10:10AM)

Absent: Tibbie Field, Alternate

Carolyn Brooks, Acting Chair and Treasurer, called the meeting to order at 9:40AM.

Agenda item 1. Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted. The former Town Treasurer Penny Holbert had prepared the June report and has instructed the new Town Treasurer to provide monthly reports to the Heritage Commission.

There was a moment of silence in honor of Jane Palmer.

Swank offered to take minutes.

Agenda item 2. Election of Officers.

The following officers were elected unanimously:

Donna Etela, Chair

Cynthia Swank, Recording Secretary

Carolyn Brooks, Treasurer

Etela became the presiding officer of the meeting.

Agenda item 3. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes for March 17, 2011 were approved as written; the minutes for April 28, 2011 were approved as amended; and the minutes for June 16, 2011 were approved as written.

The Chair will retype the minutes for April 28, 2011 with the approved changes if the electronic version cannot be located.

Agenda item 4.

RSA and Ordinance relative to Heritage Commission.

RSA 674:44-a, 44-b, and 673:4-a were distributed. The Chair described her and Swank's efforts to learn about the predecessor Historic District Commission and the duties mentioned but not defined in the local ordinance for the Heritage Commission. Members agreed that developing by-laws for the Commission might clarify how the Commission conducts its business. Swank offered to draft preliminary by-laws.

It was also noted that the RSA states that a representative of the governing authority (Select Board) must be a member of the Commission and a Planning Board member may be a member of the Commission. The local ordinance does not mention alternates at all while the RSA permits as many as five Alternates. The Commission's recent practice has been to appoint two Alternates.

The Commission reversed the order in which Agenda items 5 and 6 were discussed.

Agenda Item 6. Letter relative to Old Town Hall.

Paul Cuetara will distribute via email before the next meeting a revised version of a letter expressing the Commission's opposition to the physical moving of Town Hall, one of the options provided by Warren Street Architects in the planning for the municipal campus.

Cuetara indicated that he and George Chauncey, a member of the Old Town Hall Committee and President of the North Hampton Historical Society, are working on preparing a submission to place Town Hall on the National Register of Historic Places.

Agenda Item 5. Selection of volunteer to fill 2 year vacancy.

Cynthia Swank, an Alternate, was elected unanimously to complete Jane Palmer's term as a Commission member. She expressed her honor in succeeding such a community leader.

[Maggiore arrived]

The Commission voted unanimously to ask the Planning Board to appoint one of its members to serve as an Alternate, a one year term. The RSA673:44-a permits such an appointment.

The Chair will seek approval from the Planning Board and Select Board for the appointment of Swank as a Commission member, and request that they appoint a Planning Board member to serve as an Alternate, a one year term.

[Brooks left]

Agenda Item 7. Commission records / paper & electronic.

The Chair described the records in the file cabinets, including two drawers of records that apparently belong to the Rye Beach / Little Board's Head Garden Club and date as early as the 1910s. They may have been placed in the cabinet by the Southworths when they moved.

Jane Currivan will speak with the President of the Club, try to determine how they came to be in the file cabinet, whether they were donated to the Heritage Commission or Town, and what the Club's board wishes to do. Options include: removing them from the cabinet and retaining the records themselves, or donating them with appropriate legal transfer of title to the North Hampton Historical Society or, possibly, the Heritage Commission, assuming the Commission wishes to accept them.

The Chair and Swank will review and inventory the Heritage Commission records located in five drawers, and re-organize them where necessary. They also will review and make recommendations about the electronic files that Jenny and Penny Holbert had maintained on their home computer system. The Commission agreed that by-laws governing such transitions might be useful.

The Chair indicated that three individuals expressed an interest in making donations to the Heritage Commission in honor of Jane Palmer; and that the funds be used to purchase a fire-resistant storage cabinet. Swank obtained an estimate of about \$3000 for a resistant storage cabinet identical to the two the Town Clerk obtained through the Vital Records Improvement Fund grant program. Cost of and limited space for such a cabinet are issues. So far, no funds have been received.

Agenda Item 8. Outstanding Projects.

Farms. Jane Palmer was doing research about the major farms in North Hampton, starting with a 1940s map and going back in time. Carolyn Brooks has been in touch with Jane's daughter; if she finds materials relating to the Heritage Commission, she will notify Brooks. The project is on hold.

Old homes. The Old Homes project is to document houses 100 years or older in Town. Currivan will provide at the next meeting an outline of the project, plan of action, and legal issues that must be addressed. She made a photocopy of Little Boar's Head National Register application found at the Library which may assist in learning how selected houses were described. Swank offered to send her the link to the Division of Historical Resources inventory form, the first page of which the DHR suggests completing for the initial survey. Currivan has contacts, and experience in taking house photos and conducting deed searches but will need a team of people to complete such a project.

Cemeteries. No one had information about a specific project.

Timeline. Jenny and Penny Holbert provided the Time Line in electronic format before they left. It can be amended and supplemented but there was no discussion about any immediate action.

Town Records. Swank described the storage of the early Town records (1700s - 1900s), both bound volumes and the loose documents now in document storage boxes. Preservation issues and conservation costs, microfilm as a security copy, and scanning for access were all touched upon. Most, but not all, of the early Town records are now in fire-resistant storage cabinets. On the other hand, minutes are on open shelves in the Clerk's Office in a building without a fire

suppression system. Lack of storage for maps was mentioned. The ten or so extra copies of the 1961 tax map were discussed, including the idea of selling them to residents which the Town Administrator said could not be done because excess inventory must go out to bid.

A discussion ensued about the lack of appropriate records storage space in terms of size, protection, and environmental controls for the Town's permanent and historical records that exist and continue to be created; and that other boards and commission undoubtedly have similar storage issues that may not have been addressed in the municipal campus plan.

Swank mentioned the draft records retention and that once those records that can be destroyed are reviewed and disposed of, there may be some space available for reviewing and improving access to permanent records now in the records storage room in Town Offices. Lack of staff and limited time means that such a records clean-up project would likely need to be done on weekends. Jim Maggiore will discuss the records issues with the Town Administrator.

[Maggiore left]

Agenda Item 9. New Business.

Purchases. The Commission approved the purchase of 10 half-size archival quality document boxes for about \$60; and a picture frame to hang over the display case and be used for exhibits in a range of \$20 - 60. There also was sentiment to replace the locks on the file cabinets. Discussion about the purchase of a computer and scanner was deferred.

First Library Building. Swank learned from Loreen Keating, the North Hampton Public Library's Assistant Director / Children's Librarian that Keating planned to write a history of the Library. Swank thought that the Heritage Commission might wish to collaborate on the project as it relates to the building in which the Heritage Commission meets (the first Library building from 1907 to the early 1970s) and consider preparing an application for the State Register of Historic Places.

A discussion about the National Register for Historic Places rather than the State Register took place. Swank will learn more about Keating's project and timetable by the next meeting. Cuetara may have more information about the National Register application and process by then.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 18th at 9:30.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Cynthia Swank, Recording Secretary