

**STRATHAM HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 8, 2014**  
**Land Use Conference Room**

Present: Rebecca Mitchell, Chairman; Nathan Merrill; David Canada, Board of Selectmen; Chris Merrick, Planning Board; Florence Wiggin; Tammy Hathaway. Lincoln Daley joined the meeting later.

The meeting was convened at 7:05 PM

The Chair asked Florence Wiggin to temporarily take the place vacated by Janet Johnson.

The minutes of the September 10 meeting were read. A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Nathan Merrill and seconded by Florence Wiggin. Passed by all those who had been present at the September meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Membership:** The chair reported that the Board of Selectmen received Janet Johnson's letter of resignation, and she wished the minutes to reflect the gratitude of the Commission for Janet's service and for her willingness to support our work in the future as her circumstances allow. The chair introduced Chris Merrick who was nominated by the Planning Board and appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as the Planning Board's representative to the Commission. In the ensuing discussion Merrick agreed to also serve on the Demolition Review Committee. The Chair supplied him with copies of relevant ordinances, a copy of the Historical Resources chapter of the Master Plan and loaned him a copy of the Preserving Community Character handbook.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Nathan Merrill had no new information to report. The chair reported that she had collected \$15.75 from sales of our postcards at the Historical Society. There was agreement that since we undertook the postcard project to benefit the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the chair could hand the money directly to the anniversary committee treasurer. The chair submitted invoices for expenses incurred in relation to the fair display.

**Veteran's Garden:** Nancy Hansen reported that there are no new names to be engraved on the monuments and she will work to get any new bricks ready for Veterans' Day.

**Bartlett-Cushman House:** Peter Michaud volunteered his time to work with the Commission to prepare a report of Character Defining Features. On September 12 he spent three hours at the house with the Chair who is drafting a report of their findings to be reviewed by Michaud. Nathan Merrill reported that on Oct.1 he and Rebecca Mitchell met with Eric Chinberg who had expressed an interest in touring the house. Chinberg volunteered to assist with the preparation of the Town's RFP, noting the quality of the structure and its worthiness for preservation. Chinberg said that he felt that the structure was viable as a residence and that the Town should not forego considering that use. There

ensued a brief discussion of the relative merits and code requirements of office versus residential use.

**Planning Board:**

**Town Center:** The Commission reviewed and discussed the site plan for parking lot development of properties owned by Forma Reality in the Town Center. There was consensus that the proposed changes did little to improve existing conditions, beyond achieving the owner's goal of adding parking, and that the proposed design does not conform to the Town Center Master Plan nor does it reflect the opinions expressed by members of the public at various visioning sessions and hearings.

**Stratham Hill Park and Area:** The Chair noted that while Varsity Wireless has not submitted an application for a building permit for a communications tower at 313 Portsmouth Avenue, it is not too soon to begin planning for the educational display that will use the Commission's money designated to mitigate the impact on the area's historic resources. In the ensuing discussion a variety of persons, events, and topics relevant to the history of Stratham Hill Park, King's Great Highway/Portsmouth Avenue and the properties along its northeast section were named. It appears likely that the proposed permanent display will use three double-sided panels, as compared to the comparable display at Chapman's Landing.

**Parker Cabin:** New Hampshire Fish and Game has scheduled a meeting on Monday, October 20 at 1 PM. The Chair, Nathan Merrill and David Canada plan on attending. For the benefit of those not present at our September meeting the Chair reviewed the circumstances behind the meeting. Merrill moved that: The Heritage Commission is of the opinion that the Parker Cabin is a historic structure, a rare remaining example of past recreational uses along the Squamscott River in Stratham and should be saved or repurposed by being moved to a new location along the river, possibly at the Sandy Point Discovery Center; and that the Commission wishes to cooperate with NH Fish & Game to achieve that goal. Nancy Hansen seconded the motion and it was passed with no dissent.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Barn Program:** Nathan Merrill reported that John Porter, NH barn expert, has developed a new program on barns and that he approached Porter with the idea of tailoring the program to highlight local barns. Porter is willing to do so and will come to Stratham to add to his file of barn photographs. Nathan has also proposed sharing the program with Exeter. The proposed date is Feb. 20. There was general agreement that this would be a good program for the Commission to sponsor, and Mitchell suggested that an effort be made to highlight the barn preservation easements in Stratham.

**UNH Internships:** Rebecca Mitchell reported that she again approached the UNH History Department's MA in Museum Studies program with internship ideas, proposing projects of use to the Heritage Commission and the Stratham Historical Society. There seems to be interest on the part of at least one faculty member, Kimberly Alexander. Through this contact she also learned that the Portsmouth Athenaeum is planning a 2015

exhibit on shoemaking/cordwaining in the Piscataqua region and that the exhibit will focus substantially on Samuel Lane of Stratham.

Lincoln Daley joined the meeting at this point.

**RSA 79 E:** Daley reported that he had discussed with Paul Deschaine recent amendments to the original statute that allow the provisions of the statute to be applied to properties outside of town centers or other designated districts. The Chair said that she had expressed interest in this change that would seem to offer opportunities for Stratham since our historic properties tend to be scattered across the town. Daley voiced some of the reservations that Deschaine had communicated to him. The sense of the meeting was that this is a matter for further exploration and elucidation.

**Town Center:** Also with Daley present the meeting discussed the plans for streetscape improvements in the TC District, especially the sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

With Canada moving and Merrick seconding, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

**NEXT MEETING NOVEMBER 12, 2014 7 PM**

Minutes prepared by Tammy Hathaway and Rebecca Mitchell