



**Historic District Commission**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
Thursday, January 31, 2019 6:30 PM  
City Hall, Council Chambers

**MINUTES**  
**Approved 2/28/2019**

Mr. Messier called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM and asked for a roll call.

**I. Roll Call**

**Members Present:** David Messier, Kristin Kenniston, Bill Kennedy, Scott Pope  
**Absent:** Richard Wahrlich

**Guests:**

**Nadine Miller**, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer; runs the Certified Local Government Program  
**Megan Rupnik**, State survey coordinator and state historic preservation planner

Mr. Messier said that the purpose of this meeting was to meet one of the goals set forth in the recently updated (2017) Master Plan. The Commission had invited Nadine Miller and Megan Rupnik from the NH Division of Historic Resources to talk to the Commission about Heritage Commissions. Mr. Messier read the following from the Plan:

***HISTORIC RESOURCES***  
***1 VISION***

*The City will continue to recognize the importance of preserving and protecting its historical resources for present and future generations. These resources are essential for the cultural and economic well-being of the City. They contribute to our “sense of place”, have substantial historic and architectural value, and are a source of pride in the community.*

***Goal #2: Extend preservation/protection abilities outside of the Historic District***

- i. Continue to support the work of the HDC.*
- ii. Explore possibility of creating a Heritage Commission whose mission will be the long-term protection of the City’s historic resources.*

Mr. Messier said that the Historic District Commission has regulatory authority over exterior changes to buildings within the City’s historic district, but no authority – regulatory or otherwise – to protect buildings outside of the district. A heritage commission may offer that protection. He then turned the meeting over to the speakers.

**II. Presentation on Heritage Commissions with Megan Rupnik, NH DHR**

Ms. Rupnik gave a slide presentation about Heritage Commissions which is reproduced here:

### Heritage Commissions

**RSA 674:44-a** – for the proper recognition, use, and protection of resources, tangible or intangible, primarily manmade, that are valued for their historic, cultural, aesthetic, or community significance within their natural, built, or cultural contexts.

- Have a town-wide scope and range of activities that is determined by the municipality
- Serves as an advocate for historic resources within community
- Often compared to a Conservation Commission for historical resources

### Powers and Duties of a Heritage Commission:

- Advise and assist other local boards and commissions on matters related to historic resources
- Survey and inventory historic resources
- Assist Planning Board in writing or updating historic resources chapter in Master Plan
- Propose and implement preservation planning strategies

### A Heritage Commission may

- assume the duties of a historic district commission and function as a regulatory body over one or more locally designated historic districts.
- merge with an existing local HDC.

### Examples of combined Heritage Commissions/HDCs:

- Wakefield
- Durham
- Goffstown

### Creation of a Heritage Commission:

- Municipal council or town vote creates the commission
- Members and alternates are appointed by town council or selectmen
- Request administrative support from the town
- Members then draft and adopt their official rules of procedure—generally takes about a year
- Recommend no fewer than 4 meetings a year

### Commission Members:

- 3-7 appointed members; up to 5 alternates
- 1 member drawn from local governing body
- Members should have demonstrated interest and relevant ability and experience
- Members may also serve on other local boards

### Rules of Procedure:

- Length of terms of office
- Officers and how selected
- Meeting frequency and schedule
- Adopt a Code of Conduct
- Adhere to Right to Know law

### Setting up a Heritage Fund:

- Money can be used to acquire property
- If not already established, prepare for vote at next town meeting
- Prepare for eventual line-item or warrant article in town budget

### Build a Presence in the Community:

- Create a page on your town's website
- Introduce yourselves to town officials and offer assistance
- Reach out to community groups such as the Historical Society or Main Street organization

### Project Ideas for a Heritage Commission:

- Recognize historic buildings or events with a plaque program
- Create exhibits or offer programs on local history
- Partner with schools
- Start a preservation awards program
- Write articles for news media
- Establish a walking tour
- Create social media accounts to promote activities/historic resources

Next, Ms. Miller spoke to the Commission about demolition review. The presentation is duplicated here:

### Demolition Review: What is it?

Demolition review is a legal tool that provides communities with the means to ensure that potentially significant buildings and structures are not demolished without notice and some level of review by a preservation commission, *such as a heritage commission*.

### How does demolition review work?

A demolition review ordinance can be adopted

- As an amendment to the building code
- Implemented as a stand-alone ordinance
- As a bylaw in an existing historic preservation or zoning ordinance

\*\*Provides "time-out" to evaluate significance of the building, meet with applicant, explore alternatives\*\*

### What could be reviewed:

- Buildings built before a specific date or all buildings that have attained a certain age on the date the application is filed
- Structures that are visible from a public way
- Structures of a certain size

### Benefits of Demolition Review

- Allows time to evaluate the building's significance and/ or request a qualified professional to assist.

- If the building is determined to be historically or architecturally significant, the issuance of the demolition permit is delayed for a specific period of time (30, 60, 90 days or more).
- During that time, the preservation commission, preservation organizations, concerned citizens, and others may explore alternatives to demolition.

Developing your Town's program

- Establish an efficient process
- Have resources in place which help applicants and/or permitting officials to determine the age and significance of their buildings
- Keep the community informed
- Don't make the delay period too short
- Give local officials such as the preservation commission the necessary tools to negotiate a solution
- Enforce your ordinance

Ms. Miller then talked about the Certified Local Government Program:

What is a CLG?

- Preservation through Partnership
- Local, State, and Federal governments working together to help save the irreplaceable historic character of communities
- Through the certification process, communities make a local commitment to historic preservation

CLG Communities

Amherst	Kingston
Bristol	Lebanon
Concord	Londonderry
Derry	Nashua
Durham	New Castle
Exeter	Newington
Gilford	Newport
Goffstown	Rochester
Hebron	Rye
Hollis	Sanbornton
Jaffrey	Somersworth
Keene	Wakefield

Who can become a CLG?

To become certified, a community must:

- (1) Have a regulated historic district
- (2) Have an historic district commission that enforces appropriate state or local legislation for designation and protection of historic resources
- (3) The commission must maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties

- (4) Must provide for adequate public participation in local preservation programs, including recommending properties for nomination to the National Register

What are the benefits of being a CLG?

- Community certification opens doors to funding, technical assistance, and other preservation opportunities. At least 10% of state's annual federal appropriation for historic preservation is set aside exclusively for CLG's.
- Being a CLG demonstrates your community's commitment to saving what is important from the past for future generations.
- As a certified community it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on successful preservation projects.

What can CLG grants fund?

- Architectural, historical, archeological surveys, and oral histories
- Preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places
- Research and development of historic context information
- Writing or amending preservation ordinances
- Preparation of preservation chapters to municipal master plans
- Publications and educational activities
- Architectural, historical, archeological surveys, and oral histories
- Training for commission members and staff
- Development of architectural drawings and specifications
- Preparation of facade studies or condition assessments
- Rehabilitation or restoration of municipally owned properties individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register Historic District

As next steps, it was suggested that the Commission reach out to other communities that have had heritage commissions for a while; attend the next Historic Preservation conference; and begin the work of educating other boards and the public about the importance of historic preservation. Getting buy-in from the community is very important to success, but it takes time and effort.

The Commission thanked Ms. Miller and Ms. Rupnik for a great presentation and the valuable information.

**III. Adjournment**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston      **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
*deForest Bearse*  
 Resource Coordinator