

**Town of Effingham, New Hampshire
Historic District Commission**

**Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2014**

Present: P. Potter (Chair), R. Harrington (Assistant Chair), E. Jones (Secretary), J. McRae, N. Potter, L. Edwards (Selectmen's Representative)

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:01 p.m.

The Chair also introduced newly appointed Commissioner Jade McRae to all present. Ms. McRae was warmly welcomed by all.

The minutes of the May meeting were distributed. It was moved by R. Harrington to accept the May meeting minutes as corrected. Seconded by L. Edwards. Passed and carried.

Old Business

1) Historic District Signs.

The Chair shared the details of an updated quote from Sign One on Pine River Road for the signs. Eight 12"x18" signs will cost \$30.00 each for a total of \$240.00. There is a significant discount applied since the signs are for municipal purposes.

The Secretary brought forward a comment made to him by a member of the public that the language on the signs for the Lord's Hill District should include that the District is listed on the National Register. A brief discussion amongst the members resulted in a consensus that the wording would be left as is so that it is consistent for both districts and so that the text is large enough to be read by passing cars.

Mr. Edwards reported on the breakaway posts. They are a four-sided post with holes on all four sides that are designed to "breakaway" if struck by a vehicle, plow, etc. The price per sign on the website he found them on is \$140.00 per post however he is confident that if ordered through the Town, we could get a substantial reduction in that price. He will do additional research to determine if a better price point per post can be found.

2) Historic District maps/Planning Board.

The official black and white maps have been completed and four copies are in the possession of the Planning Board. However to make the maps more clear for those who may be viewing them the land area of the districts are being hand colored. One copy will likely be displayed in the meeting room of the Municipal Offices for reference and one copy will likely be displayed in the modular office building for reference. The other two copies will be retained by the Planning Board as backups as they may be needed.

A digital version of the map is available. The Secretary will look into what might be involved in coloring the land area of the districts on the digital version and having it placed on the town website with a link from the Historic District Commission section.

- 3) Historic Roadside Marker for the Effingham Town Hall building.

No update at this time.

- 4) Removal of the "Effingham Town Hall" sign from the Effingham Public Library building.

The sign was removed. At a Board of Selectmen's meeting, the Board authorized the Effingham Historical Society to take possession of the sign and the Society has now removed it from the Town Hall property.

- 5) Building Permit Application Process/Historic District Commission role.

The ongoing issues related to the Zoning Enforcement Officer's workflow, how building permits are reviewed and approved, and how and when then Historic District Commission should be involved were discussed. The Assistant Chair proposed that the Secretary prepare a memo to the Board of Selectmen outlining the position of the Historic District Commission on this issue, specifically referencing the applicable statutes and our understanding of them, and asking that they consult with the Town's attorney to get specific guidance on how the process should work especially with regard to the 30-day and 45-day decision deadlines for the Zoning Enforcement Officer and Historic District Commission respectively.

It is the position of the Commission that the statutes require that all applications related to properties in the districts must come to the Commission first and that if, and only if, a Certificate of Approval is issued by the Commission may the Zoning Enforcement Officer issue an approval or conditional approval for a building permit application. In the event of a denial of an application by the Commission, it is the position of the Commission that the statutes require the Zoning Enforcement Officer to deny the building permit application.

- 6) Updates and Revisions to the Commission Application Form, Fee Structure and Review Process.

The Secretary distributed newly printed copies of the current Historic District Regulations to the members.

The Secretary suggested the idea of a memo to the Planning Board at the appropriate time that proposes what the Commission believes to be necessary changes to Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Chair advised that the appropriate time to send such a memo would be prior to the Planning Board's regularly scheduled October meeting. Based on this discussion, the Assistant Chair made a motion to send a memo to the Planning Board in September that requests two changes to Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance. First, that Section 1503 be amended to lower the number of members from seven to five, with all other requirements and conditions regarding membership on the Commission remaining the same. Second, that Section 1504 be amended to indicate that a decision must be rendered within 45 days unless the applicant agrees to a longer period of time. The motion was seconded by Ms. McRae. There being no further discussion, the Chair called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

At the suggestion of the Chair, in order to allow members of the Commission to review the current Historic District regulations and make notes regarding possible changes, discussion of the regulations will be tabled until the July meeting, at which time the Commission will schedule a work session for the purpose of reviewing and revising the Historic District regulations.

7) Planning Board Work Session/Open House.

The Chair reminded all present of the Planning Board's Open House to be held on Wednesday, June 11th at 6:30 p.m. Attendance by members of the Commission was highly encouraged. This Open House will be an opportunity to make others aware of the work done by the Commission and potentially obtain new members as the Commission still has one vacancy for a full member and two vacancies for alternate members.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Jones
Secretary