

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

**Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2016**

Present: E. Chick (Chair), S. Finn (Assistant Chair), E. Jones (Secretary), N. Potter, H. Spencer (Selectmen's Representative)

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chair. There were no members of the public present.

The minutes of the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were previously distributed by email. It was moved by the Chair to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by N. Potter. Passed and carried.

The Secretary advised the Commission that no new correspondence was received since the last meeting.

Old Business

1) Historic District Signs.

The need to organize a date to do test holes and mark them for Dig Safe was briefly discussed. The Chair, the Assistant Chair, and the Secretary all volunteered to help. They will coordinate this amongst themselves.

2) Historic District maps/Planning Board.

The Secretary gave an update on the status of the maps. The drafts have been reviewed and approved and the Lakes Region Planning Commission is now working on the final versions. Not sure yet if we will be getting one map or two maps.

The Secretary also looked into the cost of having the maps printed. Using Staples, where the Town gets a Rewards discount, it will cost \$21.53 each for a 30" x 40" color print on an indoor matte polypro. It will cost \$26.33 each for a 30" x 40" laminated color print with grommets suitable for display.

The Secretary moved that we purchase five copies (one laminated with grommets) of the maps, for a total cost of approximately \$125 if there is one map, \$250 if there are two maps. N. Potter seconded. Passed and carried.

At the suggestion of H. Spencer, the Secretary will also look into what size the office can print and/or copy, with the idea of getting them a high quality print of the map or maps which they could reproduce for the public if requested.

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

No update at this time.

- 4) Potential Members/Vacancies on the Commission.

No update at this time.

- 5) Lord's Tavern/Failure to obtain Certificate of Approval.

The Secretary reported on his email correspondence with Matt Serge, the Town's Counsel, regarding the enforcement process. It was Mr. Serge's opinion that it is not necessary to prove notice was physically received, only that it was sent and not returned as undeliverable. Therefore, whenever sending any official correspondence or notice, it is best to send it via both first class and first class, certified mails. Mr. Serge also provided guidance on how to assess fines and confirmed that our understanding of how the fines are calculated was correct.

The Secretary moved that we adopt the template for the Notice of Violation which was emailed to the member of the Commission previously. H. Spencer seconded. Passed and carried.

The specific order for this violation was discussed with all being in agreement that we require that an application for the work, with all required fees, be submitted no later than June 1, 2016 and that in the event no application is received by that date, fines and costs will begin to accrue on June 13, 2016 as described in the Notice of Violation.

The Secretary will handle preparing the Notice of Violation and have it sent to the property owner.

- 6) Restoration/Maintenance to Historic Effingham Town Hall.

No update at this time.

- 7) Creation of a Master List of Data for Historic District Properties

No update at this time.

- 8) Timeline for Review and Revision of the Regulations

The timeline for a review of the regulations were discussed, with all being in agreement on the following schedule:

May meeting – Commission review of the Regulations

June meeting – Request public comment/feedback on the Regulations (if any)

July meeting – Prepare final proposal of changes to the Regulations (if any)  
August meeting – Public Hearing on the final proposed changes (if any)  
September meeting – Final approval of the revised Regulations, if changed at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

9) Purchase of Pre-Stamped Postcards

The Secretary moved to purchase a quantity of 86 pre-stamped postcards for Commission use. The Chair seconded. Passed and carried.

New Business

1) Tax Relief/Incentive Programs for Historic Structures.

The Secretary brought to the Commission's attention the existence of three RSAs which allow for tax relief or incentive for property owners under certain circumstances.

The first (RSA 79-D) allows the governing body (the Selectmen) to give tax relief to a property owner for barns and other agricultural structures to encourage restoration of those buildings in exchange for a preservation easement. There does not appear to be a requirement for approval by the Town meeting for this program.

The second (RSA 79-E), if approved by the Town meeting, allows the governing body to give tax relief to a property owner for certain qualifying structures to encourage restoration of those buildings in exchange for a preservation easement. This program is much broader in what qualifies than 79-D.

The third (RSA 79-G) allows for tax relief for buildings in downtown areas specifically used for retail to encourage their restoration. It does not appear that any structures in Effingham would qualify for this program.

It was the general feeling of the Commission that, given the Town's particular situation, the voters would be unlikely to approve any tax relief programs.

2) Historic District Regulations Enforcement Workflow.

The Secretary suggested that the Commission consider adopting a workflow for enforcement that would allow some of the initial steps to be undertaken without the need for a meeting of the Commission, in order to allow the beginning of the process to start more quickly. It was suggested that perhaps the Commission could create such a workflow by modifying the one already used by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

While the idea of a workflow to follow was generally seen favorably by all, concerns were raised about allowing any individual member of the Commission to take any steps in an enforcement process without the approval of the entire board. H. Spencer noted that while this can work well, if the board in question works well together, it can also go badly, if an individual member or members of the board in question have any sort of "private agenda."

No further action was taken at this time.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Jones  
Secretary