

TOWN OF NEWPORT
Heritage Commission Meeting
Municipal Building - Newport, NH 03773
Minutes of November 26, 2018 6:00 pm
Regular Meeting and Public Hearings

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Cathryn Baird, Chairperson; Jacqueline Cote, Dean Stetson, Virginia Irwin, Ken Vigue, Bill Wilmot, Jr., BOS Representative Alternate

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Kelly, Alternate; John Hooper II, BOS Representative

GUESTS (New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources): Nadine Miller, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer; Amy Dixon, Grants Coordinator

VIDEOGRAPHER: Louis Cassorla

STAFF PRESENT: Liz Emerson, Zoning Administrator

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Baird called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m. followed by a roll call.

MINUTES: November 27, 2017

On a motion by Mrs. Cote, seconded by Mr. Vigue; *the Commission approved the minutes of the November 27, 2017 meeting as presented. The motion passed 5-0-1 (Wilmot abstained).*

PUBLIC HEARING: None

ADMINISTRATION: Amy Dixon, New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR)

Chairperson Baird addressed the Commissioners and introduced Ms. Amy Dixon, speaker.

Ms. Dixon addressed the Commissioners and introduced Ms. Nadine Miller, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. Ms. Dixon stated they worked together administering the program for the State; Ms. Dixon was responsible for the grants and Ms. Miller was responsible for organizing, management and planning for the Certified Local Governments (CLG).

Ms. Miller explained what a CLG was. Many Heritage Commissions did not realize they were a CGL. There are currently twenty four CLGs in NH. Newport has been a CLG since 1997. Ms. Dixon explained the process taken in 1997 for Newport to become a CLG community.

Members were not aware that Newport was already a Certified Local Government and what services they were able to get by being one.

Ms. Dixon explained being a CLG was a partnership between the local Heritage Commission, the NH Department of Historical Resources and the National Park Service (federal level). It engages the local with the state and federal levels. It is a grant program for the local level.

Ms. Dixon asked about the Newport Heritage Commission. Because the Commission had not met in a while, she asked if the Heritage Commission only responded to applications in the Historical District or if they were working on a larger agenda with the Town.

Chairman Baird stated there had been changes of key people over the years (Commission). The Commission responded to applications located in the historic district that come to the Planning and Zoning Office to make sure they (applications) were in keeping with the Heritage Commission mission

statement. 2018 was not a busy year; in 2017 there were several applications that came before the Heritage Commission.

Ms. Dixon asked what area the Heritage Commission regulated. For clarification she asked if it was around the Common and Main Street.

Chairman Baird stated they regulated the designated Newport historic district.

Ms. Dixon asked if it was a nationally registered historic district. She was told yes.

Ms. Miller asked about the general interest by the Town concerning the Heritage Commission and the history of the Town. She was told that there was not an interest in the Heritage Commission, but there was a great interest in the history of the Town.

Ms. Miller addressed the Commissioners and stated that:

1. Some commissions were only interested in the local historic district.
2. Some do advocacy for the whole town.
3. Others are combined; the CLG monies available can be used for projects in any part of the town.

When considering grant opportunities, it is important to look at the whole town.

The Commissioners were given examples of other CLG communities, their projects and how the NHDHR had assisted them. Grants ranged from workshops to brick and mortar projects. Ms. Miller stated that some of the largest projects were undertaken with a combination of NHDHR, LCHIP and Moose Plate grant funds.

Ms. Emerson informed the Commissioners and Ms. Miller that she had just completed writing two grants to get an assessment of Newport's Courthouse Restaurant and Opera House to prioritize what improvements need to be done. Ms. Miller informed her that she had just read them. Their department would be discussing them on November 27, 2018. They complimented Ms. Emerson on the applications.

Ms. Miller addressed the Heritage Commission and stated the NHDHR office in Concord was available to provide guidance and inform them about grants.

She also stated that every four years a representative from their department was required to meet with the local Heritage Commissions and do a check list to see how things were going in the community. They had never met with the Newport Heritage Commission, only the past TOPAZ administrator.

Ms. Miller was asked who the other CLG communities were. She listed the following:

Keene
Rochester
Concord
Wakefield
Sanbornton
Exeter
Lebanon

Chairman Baird asked if any town had received grants for covered bridges, explaining in 2019 the Town would be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the reconstruction of the Corbin Covered Bridge in Newport.

Chairman Baird was told they were not aware of any bridge grants through NHDHR.

Chairman Baird asked if grants were limited to buildings. She asked, in addition, if grants were limited to the historic district. She was told grants were not limited to buildings or solely the historic district.

Ms. Dixon went through her (state required) checklist with the Commission:

- 1) Does the Commission have an ordinance in place that allows the Heritage Commission to regulate and render opinions concerning construction and repairs in the historic district? She was told yes.
- 2) Do you have an active commission? Yes
- 3) Change in membership. Ms. Dixon asked Ms. Emerson if she kept a copy of the member's applications on file. She was told yes. Ms. Dixon asked for copies of the applications for the NHDHR office.

Ms. Miller stated she would follow up with an email concerning the information needed.

- 4) Ms. Dixon asked if Commissioners terms were staggered. She was told yes.
- 5) Were member vacancies easy to fill? For CLGs the state request was to fill a vacancy within 60 days. She was told members remained on the Commission (and reapplied), vacancies were easy to fill.

Mrs. Cote stated that all the current members on the Heritage Commission were also members of the Newport Historical Society. She stated there was a strong interest in the historic preservation of Newport.

Ms. Miller stated historical societies and heritage commissions often partner to conduct workshops and present historical speakers for the public.

- 6) Did the Newport Heritage Commissions meet at least quarterly? She reviewed items that could be discussed at meetings in addition to applications. Ms. Miller gave additional input, stressing that the Newport Commission look at the state regulations. She would send the internet link to Ms. Emerson.
- 7) Does the Newport Heritage Commission have Rules of Procedure? She was told yes.
- 8) The Heritage Commission was a land-use Board. She asked how they worked with the Planning and Zoning Boards. Ms. Emerson gave an explanation of their role and procedure.

Ms. Miller stated that one aspect of her job was to review federal and state projects as well as smaller projects going through the CLG communities. She asked contractors to coordinate their work with the local heritage commissions and historical societies. Ms. Miller asked the Commission to discuss whether they wanted her to coordinate discussions or not.

- 9) Surveying and identifying historic resources in the community. Ms. Dixon informed the Commissioners that historical survey grants are funded 100% (no Town match). It would be an identifying survey, something that would potentially lead to a national historic register nomination.

There was a general discussion on grant projects and responsibilities on the local and state levels.

- 10) She asked if Newport had a Historical Resources Chapter in their Master Plan. Ms. Emerson said Newport did, it was an eleven page chapter.

Ms. Miller stated that a project such as writing a Historical Resources Chapter could be awarded a 60/40 grant (Town paying 40%). She explained how a city or town could pay the 40% in "soft money".

Ms. Miller addressed the Commissioners and explained the procedure involved to acquire a grant through the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources:

- I. Letter of Intent (closing date November 26th; date will be extended for Newport). The amount of information for the letter was explained to the Heritage Commission.
- II. Application in by January 2019. Explanation of project and estimated cost.
- III. If awarded grant, Start-up Meeting by phone or in the “field” with a NHDHR representative, a Heritage Commission representative and professional.
- IV. Quarterly Progress Report (TOPAZ Office)
- V. Review report by Newport (for historical accuracy)
- VI. Review by Concord
- VII. Public Meeting by NHDHR in Newport to review total project (for survey project)

The NHDHR representatives stated they would assist at each step.

Mrs. Cote asked, for clarification, if the project needed to be in the Historical District. She was told it could be in any part of the town.

Mr. Stetson asked how much grant funding was available to the NH CLG communities. He was told \$65,000 annually.

Ms. Dixon explained the process in which her department received money. She stated they were required to distribute all money given to them each year to CLGs that apply. A grant runs for two years. Mr. Stetson asked if they dispersed \$65,000 last year. He was told yes; the NHDHR was required to distribute all monies allotted to them by the National Park Service.

Mr. Stetson asked how competitive it was to be awarded a grant. He was told that currently one third (eight communities) are actively applying for grants. Active communities have reapplied for many years; completing projects in phases. The NHDHR encouraged phased projects (to spread the money to more communities).

Ms. Miller explained how money was distributed throughout the state by their department.

Chairman Baird asked what the fiscal year was for NHDHR. She was told it ran from October 1st and ran for two years (to complete a project). They further explained their funding to the Commissioners.

Mr. Stetson asked what the caveats to the Town were in accepting any grant money. He was told that the caveats were: a) certain projects needed to have a qualified person do the work, b) quarterly reporting needed to be done, and c) what could be purchased with the grant money; especially with workshops.

He was told the National Park Service liked to see survey projects that would lead to historical national register nominations in NH.

Ms. Miller also stated that any private individual or company going for a national register nomination should go before the Heritage Commission for review and comments.

There was a general discussion on national historical register nominations.

Ms. Dixon said they had concluded their presentation. She asked if the Commissioners had any thoughts about a potential letter of intent for a grant this year. An email to the NHDHR office with bulleted ideas would be acceptable.

Mr. Stetson addressed Ms. Dixon and stated that the Historical Society had discussed getting interpretive signage at the two railroad covered bridges and the Corbin Covered Bridge in Newport. He asked if NHDHR's grant funding be applicable for this use and if the Newport Heritage Commission could work toward obtaining a grant for this purpose.

There was a discussion on Newport's covered bridges, their age and whether they had been put on the National Historic Register.

Ms. Miller stated that if the Commission worked with an architectural historian and designer, the NHDHR grant would cover it.

The question of having a state sign was asked. Members were told that they would have to pay for it. Ms. Miller asked if there was a pull off area for a sign similar to the National Park Service.

Mrs. Cote, Ms. Dixon and Ms. Miller discussed having interpretive signage at both the Wright and Pier Bridges.

Ms. Miller suggested an addition to the signage request of a special event presentation on bridges that could be funded through a grant. Information would be disseminated through the TOPAZ staff and a Heritage Commissioner. They would want to keep the Commission in the loop.

Mrs. Cote asked if NHDHR has contact with Mr. Jim Garvin. She would like to contact him to see if he would give bridge presentations to interested individuals during the Newport Corbin Covered Bridge Festival in 2019. Ms. Miller told Mrs. Cote that if the public presentation could be incorporated with the educational presentation, a grant from NHDHR would pay for his speaking (Mr. Garvin is an architectural historian).

Chairman Baird addressed the NHDHR representatives and asked what the procedure was for the Newport Heritage Commission. She asked if they needed a motion to pursue a grant under the auspices of being a CLG?

Ms. Emerson said yes, stating that the motion by the Newport Heritage Commission wanting to go forward with pursuing a grant should be done. Ms. Emerson stated she would work "hand in hand" with the Commission.

There was a discussion on the different Boards in Newport and who would need to be involved along with the Heritage Commission.

Mr. Stetson made a motion, ***that the Town of Newport seek out funding through the CLG program for signs for our three covered bridges if possible; if not for the two covered bridges currently on the national register assisted by Ms. Emerson through the Planning and Zoning Office.*** It was seconded by Mrs. Cote.

Ms. Miller asked Mr. Stetson to add an amendment requesting money for an educational program and guest lecturer to the motion.

Mr. Stetson stated he would amend his motion to include *any additional funding available to support an educational lecture with regards to our covered bridges. That that is included in this grant request.*

The motion then read:

Mr. Stetson made a motion, ***that the Town of Newport seek out funding through the CLG program for signs for our three covered bridges if possible; if not for the two covered bridges currently on the***

national register with assistance by Ms. Emerson through the Planning and Zoning Office. The grant is to include any additional funding available to support an educational lecture with regards to our covered bridges. It was seconded by Mrs. Cote.

Ms. Miller stated they needed an email stating the motion. Ms. Emerson stated she would send it. Ms. Dixon stated she would contact the Town office about ways to fill out the application.

Ms. Miller said their website had a list of professional people the Town could use: Historical Architects and Designers, individuals that could give estimates for the work to be done.

Mr. Wilmot addressed the Chair and stated there was a motion and a second on the floor.

Chairperson Baird asked if there was further discussion. There being none she called for a vote. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

The NHDHR representatives thanked the Commission for their time. Chairperson Baird thanked them for coming and also for the extension date for the letter of intent from Newport.

Ms. Emerson addressed the Commission and stated Newport would hear from them on November 27th about the grants for the Courthouse and Opera House. If awarded, the grants would be 50/50 grants. She told them the name of the architects the Town would be working with.

There was a general discussion on meetings, the future focus of the Commission and projects that could potentially use NHDHR grant funding. Ms. Emerson was asked to email the Commissioners a list of the current national and state Historic Register sites in Newport.

On a motion by Chairperson Baird, seconded by Mr. Stetson; ***the Heritage Commission voted to adjourn at 6:53 p.m. The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson
Scribe

Approved on December XX, 2018