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Town of Amherst, NH

HERITAGE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

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Town Hall – Landry Conference Room
Thursday, August 11, 2016 at 7:30 PM

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I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Will Ludt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Members of the commission in attendance included Andy Ouellette, Lisa Montesanto, and Mary Mahar. Those absent included: Larry McCoy and Tom Grella.

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II. **Topics of Discussion**

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a. “Throwback Thursday – Amherst Heritage”

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Chairman Ludt mentioned that Baseball Hall of Famer, Frank Selee, was born in Amherst across from The Wigwam Museum. The “Throwback Thursday” discussion then led to a movie that Andy Ouellette had produced when he was in high school that commission members had yet to see. Andy Ouellette said that he and friends put together the film as a joke along the lines of Mission Impossible. Chairman Ludt mentioned that Mr. Ouellette was born and raised in Amherst. Andy said that when he was born, his family rented a house on Christian Hill Road and years later bought a house on Mack Hill. Mr. Mack was moderator of the town for a long time; hence, the name Mack Hill. Andy stated that Mr. Secomb was also a moderator in town. Mr. Mack’s house was sold to a guy in New Boston named McGuinness and was rebuilt in 1916.

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b. Update on Bertha Rogers Grant

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Chairman Ludt stated that it has taken two months to get everything signed and sealed relative to the Bertha Rogers grant that the Commission received. They now have an agreement with the town to proceed with cataloguing what is in the town vault. A vendor, Cynthia Swank, has been selected to do the work. Ms. Swank is a certified archivist from North Hampton, and has experience working with towns. She has visited the site and estimates the work will take about 10 months starting in September. Commission members will monitor the progress and will need to pitch in with putting together shelving and the like, but the project should not require too much volunteer time. Ruslyn Vear is interested in helping. In response to Mary Mahar, Chairman Ludt said everything that doesn’t need to be in the vault will be

47 moved downstairs. The grant amount is \$8,900 with probably \$6,000 or \$7,000
48 going to the archivist. About \$1,000 will be set aside for shelving, boxes, and
49 other incidental expenses. Ms. Swank will inventory items in the vault and set
50 up a spreadsheet describing items, their likely age, etc. Nancy Demers, Town
51 Clerk, has met Ms. Swank and has given her blessing to moving forward on the
52 project.

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54 c. Planning for NHDHR Visit – September 8, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. -- CLG

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56 Chairman Ludt said he had been working with the folks at the Department of
57 Historic Resources (DHR) and Jamie Ramsey of the Historic District
58 Commission. Staff of DHR has agreed to meet with commission members
59 scheduled for September 8th at 5:00 p.m. Mary Mahar will be unable to attend.
60 Chairman Ludt asked other commission members to make every effort to
61 attend. Both Andy Ouellette and Lisa Montesanto said they should be able to
62 make it. Chairman Ludt said there have been staff changes at the DHR – Amy
63 Dickson took over for Deb Gagnon who retired. DHR will send a list of
64 questions to get the dialogue going and talk about future grant opportunities.
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66 d. Quarries in Amherst

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68 Chairman Ludt said he learned from Ruslyn Vear about a fellow who is
69 documenting quarries in Amherst. Tom Mortimer does research into
70 geology/granite formation and has found that Amherst had ten known quarries
71 from the 1800s to 1900s; most of them now filled in. Chairman Ludt went
72 through a number of slides showing a number of the quarries. A lot of good
73 work has been done to identify where the quarries are and provide some
74 description. One of the four or five quarries on Lyndeborough Road has a
75 conservation trail that goes right by it. There are two off Sargent Road. The
76 Conservation Commission is interested in referencing these quarries as
77 historical resources, and would like the Heritage Commission's help to
78 document the quarries a bit better and reference as historical resources.
79 Chairman Ludt thought it would be a good idea to update the historic
80 resources survey as well. The link to the Quarry Research is
81 <http://mindatnh.org/AmherstQuarries>.

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83 e. Discussion on possible Heritage Commission Members

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85 Chairman Ludt met with Conor Frain who is interested in serving on the
86 Heritage Commission. He is a nice guy, seems enthusiastic, and lives off
87 County Road and Ridgewood Drive. He moved to Amherst about a year and ½
88 ago, has twins and a 3 ½ year old son, and is expecting another child. He
89 worked at BAE Systems for five years or so. Chairman Ludt will send a note
90 to Tom Grella to help move Mr. Frain's nomination forward.
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92 Lisa Montesanto said she has not spoken to Liz Larson but may be able to once
93 school starts. She did speak with John Bement who bought the old law office.
94 He serves on the Historical Society Development Committee. He loves history
95 and may be interested in serving on the Heritage Commission.
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97 f. Updates from Other Boards and Commissions Attendance
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99 Lisa Montesanto said there would be no Antiques on the Green event. A
100 committee was formed to figure out something else and they have been
101 discussing holding a Halloween Cemetery Walk on October 30th. They would
102 sell tickets outside of the chapel, have old fashioned games and guided tours.
103 Locals would be hired to read a script. They are also discussing how to add to
104 the third grade history week.
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106 Chairman Ludt mentioned that on September 18th, the town library, along
107 with 17 southern NH library communities is celebrating John Steinbeck's The
108 Grapes of Wrath in a kick-off party for the NEA Big Read, a program of the
109 National Endowment for the Arts. The event will have 1930s music and
110 exhibits, living history presentations, food and drinks. Chairman Ludt felt this
111 is the kind of event that the Heritage Commission could help with.
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113 Chairman Ludt attended the Conservation Commission meeting for a half hour
114 before they went into non public session. Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara
115 talked about the town purchase order requirements, the process for getting
116 bids, and handling of donations which can only be approved by the Board of
117 Selectmen; though funds do get into recipient accounts. It was a reminder on
118 the processes. There were a lot of agenda items to be taken up. The Zoning
119 Board is scheduled to meet next week about LaBelle Winery's purchase of
120 property across the street from its winery. They are expecting a lot of people
121 since the meeting will be held at the Souhegan High School auditorium,
122 instead of here at Town Hall, on August 25th.
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124 Andy Ouellette printed up shots of the town of Amherst that he extracted from
125 topographical technology called LiDAR, or Light Detection and Ranging. The
126 prints show what the surface of town looks like, stripped away of all
127 vegetation. The technology is a surveying system that measures distance by
128 illuminating a target with a laser light. Mr. Ouellette said he got interested in
129 the technology as part of the stone wall project where a ton of readings are
130 created using laser light. He walked through the resolution noting the middle
131 of Route 101, Eagle Rock, Patch Hill, Walnut Hill, Baboosic Lake and the flat
132 area being the village. The software shows how the village got to be as flat as
133 it is. He said that on the computer, the stone walls are visible, and he can do
134 images at different resolutions. The website at UNH is called Granit. One of
135 several software programs can be downloaded and used to extract data
136 provided in blocks and saved as PDFs. Mr. Ouellette said he spoke with Sara

137 Siskavich of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission a couple of years ago
138 about LiDAR, and she could probably provide information on how to improve
139 the process.
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141 **III. Minutes of Meetings**

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143 Meeting minutes pending approval will be resent to commission members.
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145 **IV. Adjourn**

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147 The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.
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