



# Town of Amherst, NH

## HERITAGE COMMISSION MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

2 Main Street

Thursday, August 14, 2014 at 7:30 PM

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Will Ludt called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Attendees: Chairman Will Ludt, Commission members Andy Ouellette, Carolyn Quinn, and Mary Mahar. Also present: Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes. Absent: Bill Veillette, Larry McCoy, Selectman Tom Grella, and Eric Hahn, Planning Board Liaison. No members of the public were in attendance.

### II. Topics of Discussion

a. The new minute taker, Suzanne Beauchesne, received a warm welcome from attendees.

#### b. Update on NHDHR Grant

Chairman Ludt provided an update on the \$11,530 grant received from the NH Division of Historical Resources (DHR) to conduct a survey of four farms in Amherst. Town Administrator Jim O'Mara and Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) Mike Akillian have signed off on all paperwork which has been sent to Deb Gagne at the State office. A draft RFP has also been sent to the State, and once approved, the Commission will be able to solicit proposals from historic preservation consultants for assistance in performing the survey. Liz Hegnen will try to squeeze in some time to submit a proposal. Once a suitable contractor has been identified, the Commission (via Chairman Ludt) will make a recommendation to the BOS.

The contract is expected to start on October 1, 2014 and is to be completed by September 2015. The grant is financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior.

The Commission members have identified (shown on an overhead map) an area that could perhaps be included into the NH State Register of Historic Places and best represents Amherst's rich agricultural history. The total acreage is 236+ acres and the properties are on a designated scenic road.

Mr. Ludt indicated that approval to survey has been received from the Parker Farm with easement property, and the Lynch Farm. Each property has 50-plus acres and much historical significance. The Clark Farm (Bert Knight's farm) initially stated they did not have time to participate but they are reconsidering. Will Ludt explained to Mrs. Knight that the project was low-maintenance for property owners. The Upham Farm came back and said "absolutely not", they did not want to participate.

One additional farm within the designated area needs to be identified. Asked whether he knew the owners of the Converse Farm, Andy Ouellette indicated that he did not. Bruce Beckley who is on the Conservation Commission knows the owners of another farm near the Parker Farm which is another possibility. Another alternative is the Carolyn Mitchell Farm on Boston Post Road. The property has lots of history and is where Robert Frost lived. Mr. Ludt indicated that the survey would not be as extensive as the survey done in 2002 and most of the burden will be on the contractor selected rather than on Commission members.

It is hoped that the survey will assist in preparing documentation needed for possible state register consideration.

**c. Amherst Village Strategic Plan Committee – Heritage Commission Representative**

The town will be undertaking an Amherst Village Center Strategic Plan in an effort to address a number of resident complaints regarding traffic speed and flow, noise and safety concerns. The issue came to a head with the closure of the Mack Hill Bridge. Will Ludt referenced a draft plan which had been received and reviewed by Commission members. The BOS is working with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). A project committee, made up of 8 to 12 members, including a Heritage Commission member, will be selected by and have oversight from the BOS.

NRPC will provide facilitation training for committee members, as well as develop handouts and other resources as needed. Committee members will be responsible for scheduling and facilitating focus groups. Vice Chairman of the BOS, Mike Akillian, will chair the committee and hopes to start meetings in September. The NRPC will finance a portion of the project. Town expense will add up to approximately \$5,000.

Bill Veillette has volunteered to serve on the committee. Carolyn Quinn agreed to serve as an Alternate. All agreed with this assignment. Will Ludt reminded attendees that the Heritage Commission goal is to make sure the Village Center does not become an urban center. All meetings will be opened to the public and all commission members will have an opportunity to comment throughout the process.

All agreed they do not want “a lot of curbing”. Andy Ouellette pointed out that there are no “upgraded cow paths” in town, but rather, were “roads that cows used”.

**d. Interdepartmental Review – Latest Documents**

Colleen Mailloux, Community Development Director, distributed two applications made to the Planning Board. Comments are due back to Ms. Mailloux by August 25, 2014.

Chairman Ludt expressed concern about the Bragdon subdivision. Applicant, Bird-Dog Investments, LLC is seeking a conceptual review of a residential subdivision of one lot into eight. (Owners, Nancy Kierstead & Betsey Noble, Trustees. 340 Route 101, PIN #008-052-000, Zoned NTZ & WWCD).

Looking at the overhead map, the subject property is located across the road from LaBelle Winery. It will be important to give them feedback on the need to make sure they maintain the historical nature of the property, including the stone walls. It was felt that if the property owners want to tear down the home and farm, the Heritage Commission must be engaged. Andy Ouellette agreed to draft a response. All comments should be sent to Will Ludt by August 21<sup>st</sup>.

A second application was received by Roger L. and Betty Jo Labonte requesting approval of a residential subdivision of one lot into two. 2 Ponemah Hill Road & Hollis Road, PIN #001-008-001, Zoned RR, ACWPD, FPCD & WWCD. All comments should be sent to Will Ludt by August 21<sup>st</sup>.

**e. Updates from other Boards and Commissions Attendance**

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103 No updates were provided since many meetings were not held in August.  
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105 **III. Minutes Update**  
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107 **IV. Commission Roundtable**  
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109 Andy Ouellette mentioned that trying to track property ownership is limited. Mr. Ouellette  
110 contacted Town Administrator O'Mara asking whether there was access to the registry of deeds. A  
111 response is pending.  
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113 Chairman Ludt reported that he had run into the Superintendent of Schools who reminded him of  
114 work needing to be done to the front part of the Brick School building. Both agreed to work  
115 together to try to bring the front part of the building back to its original concept. The renovation  
116 work is dependent on the school district chipping in, and Mr. Ludt recalled that funds may be  
117 available from grants received years ago – the Bean grant and/or the Rogers grant -- that could be  
118 put towards this project. John Kendall took measurements and estimated the cost to be between  
119 \$20,000 and \$25,000. Mr. Ludt will research further whether grant funds are available, how much,  
120 and whether the funds could be used towards this project.  
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122 **V. Adjourn**  
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124 The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.