

TOWN OF AMHERST
Heritage Commission

October 8, 2020

APPROVED

In attendance: Will Ludt – Chair, Lisa Montesanto, Tom Grella – BOS Ex-Officio, Conor Frain, Liz Larson (Alternate), and John Bement.

Staff in attendance: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – minute taker.

1. Roll Call to Order

Will Ludt called the meeting to order at 6:31pm., with the following statement. As Chair of the Amherst Heritage Commission, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by various Executive Orders, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799 and password 871 7525 8592, or by clicking on the following website address:

<https://zoom.us/j/87175258592> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: www.amherstnh.gov.

Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.

Roll call attendance: Will Ludt, Conor Frain, Tom Grella, Liz Larson, John Bement, and Lisa Montesanto – all present.

Liz Larson sat for Brenda Perry.

October 8, 2020

APPROVED

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

2. “Throw Back” Thursday – Amherst Heritage

Conor Frain stated that 80 years ago yesterday the Works Progress Administration broke ground to construct the Manchester Army Airbase, a precursor to the Manchester/Boston Regional Airport. There was previously an airport in Manchester, called the Smithfield Airport, that consisted of two runways and a small hangar. The WPA budget for the project was \$1.5 million dollars, which is about \$30 million dollars today. The project was also specified to be completed within 30 days. Approximately 2,000 men put together 118 buildings on the base by the end of January. In early 1941, the US Government acquired the land around Joe English Hill, and by the end of 1941 construction had been started on the bombing range.

Kristan Patenaude showed the group two postcards of Amherst that she found in a bookstore in western Massachusetts. One displays a view of Main Street back in the 1900’s, and the other shows an area known as “The Pine Grove,” in Amherst. No one seemed to know quite where that would have been in Town.

3. Discussion of Draft Public Survey for 2020-2021 Master Plan

Will Ludt explained that a subcommittee from the Planning Board has been working on a draft survey regarding the Master Plan process. The group reviewed the survey, noting certain amendments they’d like to see, including:

- Put page number at the footers;
- Under “General Topics” add “in Amherst” to “Historic Resources;”
- Add “Traffic Control in the Village;”
- Include context regarding “Food Sustainability” (does this include CSAs, community gardens, etc.)
- Include context regarding “Town Facilities” (what is this is regards to?)
- Include context/granularity regarding “Energy Use” (by the Town? By individuals?)
- Include context/additional information regarding “Emergency Services”
- Additional lines to write in extra information for “Other, please specify” section
- Define “Non-emergency Ambulance Service”
- Possibly adding a section for “Senior Services” within “Services needed in Amherst in the next 10 years”
- Under “Use and development of land in Amherst” to include “encourage originality of lot layouts”
- Define “Agribusiness” and “Agritourism”
- Explain/clarify “Limit the number of residential building permits” because the number of permits granted doesn’t bear a relationship to the number of units built or amount of development. Does this mean new homes or a new deck/addition?
- Under “Town of Amherst Community Facilities” clarify for places that people can’t go/aren’t publicly available (Police Station, Brick School, etc.)
- Describe the mechanism of preservation being considered under “Amherst Rural Character”
- Under “factors for moving to Amherst” consider the wording of “opportunity” to purchase/rent

October 8, 2020

APPROVED

In response to a question from Will Ludt, Natasha Kypfer explained that the survey is intended to be a broad mechanism to garner interest from the public and get their rankings on various items. This information can then be used to gather possible themes for the Master Plan.

Conor Frain noted that, without specifics on some of these items, there may be a level of neutrality that people answer with if they are unclear as to what the question actually is.

Natasha Kypfer stated that this survey will probably go out to the public through Survey Monkey and possibly through paper copies. She explained that she believes surveys should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. This survey currently takes about 7-8 minutes to complete.

Will Ludt expressed concern over the responses that might be received if about 20% of the survey items are not described well.

Natasha Kypfer noted that, if a question isn't well understood, it is probably not of high importance to the person being surveyed, which is information the survey is looking for.

In response to a suggestion from Conor Frain regarding providing the opinions of entities for community facility priorities, Natasha Kypfer explained that the survey is supposed to be neutral with no bias, which is why there is a category for "no opinion."

Will Ludt noted that he's asked Dwight Brew, Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee, to invite a representative from the Heritage Commission to sit on the subcommittee for Amherst's Rural Character when the time comes.

Liz Larson questioned if volunteers that sit on these subcommittees will have to disclose if they have vested interests in Town businesses, etc. She suggested that the groups be transparent.

4. Amherst Garden Club Bench Proposal

John Bement explained that the Garden Club is looking for a way to commemorate their 50th anniversary while also giving back to the Town. It was decided to place a granite bench and plant a tree at the corner of Jones Road and Mack Hill Road. The Historic District Commission seemed to be supportive of the idea. Currently, the Garden Club is leaning towards a dogwood tree.

Conor Frain moved to approve the Garden Club bench and tree proposal, as presented. Lisa Montesanto seconded.

Roll call: Will Ludt – aye; Conor Frain – aye; Liz Larson - aye; Tom Grella – aye; John Bement – abstained; and Lisa Montesanto – aye. 5-1-0; motion carried.

5. Feedback on: 16 September 2020, 7:00PM, Speaker, via Zoom, "Votes for Women: A History of the Suffrage Movement in NH and the Nation"

Will Ludt stated that there was a good turnout for the event, about 40 people. He suggested that Commissioners think about any topics to pursue for a future CLG grant.

October 8, 2020

APPROVED

6. Feedback on September “Homework” Assignment

Will Ludt explained that one of the items that came up from the assignment is signage to bring the history of certain areas around Town to life. Conor Frain stated that the signage would allow people to read about the history of the Town while exploring local sites. Some examples given were Baboosic Lake and the Corn Crib.

Will Ludt stated that he would like to tie this to the Historic District’s electronic resource survey/map. Will Ludt suggested that he and Conor Frain draft this proposal and eventually send it forward for consideration.

7. Minutes: 10 September 2020

Conor Frain moved to approve the minutes of September 10, 2020, as written. Tom Grella seconded.

Roll call: Will Ludt – aye; Conor Frain – aye; Liz Larson – aye; Tom Grella – aye; John Bement – aye; and Lisa Montesanto – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Chair Topics and Discussion/Roundtable

Will Ludt stated that the Eagle Rock trip has been postponed to October 17, 2020, at 10am.

Connor Frain moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 PM. John Bement seconded.

Roll call: Will Ludt – aye; Conor Frain – aye; Liz Larson - aye; Tom Grella – aye; John Bement – aye; and Lisa Montesanto – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*

Minutes approved: November 12, 2020