

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**MINUTES– Wednesday, November 9, 2011--Norwich Historical Society, 277 Main Street, Norwich**

Attending: Bill Aldrich, Roger Blake, Peter Brink, Phil Dechert, Nancy Hoggson, Anne Silberfarb,

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

1. **Minutes** of August 2011 approved as presented.
2. **Budget** surplus re the original grant award of \$7,901. Phil is working on the final report, which will be sent to the Division for Historic Preservation (Diane McLnerney). He will send a copy of the final budget report to Nancy H. Addition (if approved by the voters) of \$1K in Planning/Zoning budget to cover HPC expenses or help with the 40% match that comes with each grant award. Grant surplus, when received, can also be used to help with this match on future grants.
3. **Election of HPC officers** – as listed above. Additional members up to 7 are being encouraged, the maximum number recommended by the Division for Historic Preservation. Several names were suggested, and personal calls will be made vs. another notice on the ListServe to encourage applications.
4. **Historic Walking Tour brochure** – a huge success. Distribution continues to go well through the State Welcome Centers. King Arthur and Montshire will carry the brochure. We anticipate having to send more to the State Welcome Centers in the spring. Nancy will check with the state to see how many are left from the original July 2011 shipment of 5,000. Peter has been handling the local distribution, and brochures are going quickly at the Norwich Inn and other sites too.
5. **Updates: Beaver Meadow School House** has just received their PTV Condition Assessment, which was done this summer. Some members of the group expressed disappointment in the report, saying it did not really give them much new information. Ann Cousins of PTV will meet with the group December 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the report and apparent miscommunication. The building, with the exception of no water and plumbing, was confirmed to be in reasonably good shape thanks to the ongoing care from the School House leadership. They would like to see it used more by the community, and the general feeling is that plumbing and water are needed for that to happen.

**Root District School House (RDSH)** has had several meetings re the 2002 PTV Condition Assessment. That report indicated some major work needed to be done to the foundation; a site visit in 2010 with PTV and the HPC confirmed the poor condition of the foundation. RDSH have met several times and would like to turn this building into a community center modeled after the Rice's Mills Community Center in Thetford. That was a derelict building too and was restored successfully after an active group of community leaders got together to make it happen. This building had been transferred by quit claim deed from the Norwich School District to the Root District Game Club, of which the Root District Community Center is a successor. The deed includes reversionary provisions based on the group insuring and maintaining the building. They have discussed (with Beaver Meadow) putting together a 'Friends of Norwich One-Room Schoolhouses' committee and run a town-wide capital campaign to support both buildings. Nancy suggested that much preliminary work still has to be done in terms of a feasibility study to find out if the community would support this.

**Community Bread/Pizza Oven:** Peter stated that he had at first seen this as a possible project for the HPC, but now realizes it does not fall easily within HPC's parameters. Peter has been working with Rod Gurwitt and Dan Haedrich and with Jill Kearney of Norwich Parks and

Recreation, who are most interested in having repairs done to the oven so that the community events (both public and private) can begin again this spring/summer, with usage expanded.

6. Peter is doing a major article for the Norwich Times for their next issue on "Why Preserve" and will feature the two School Houses, noting other restoration/preservation projects ahead in Norwich.

7. **The Grange** has requested a meeting with the HPC to review their building concerns. Annah Dupuis, their next-door neighbor and Grange Secretary, attended the February 2011 Norwich Inn breakfast with PTV and wants to learn more. Nancy and Peter will coordinate with PTV and set up a meeting.

8. **NHS annual meeting** - Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm. The format this year will be a 'thank you' to everyone who helped make the NHS past year such a success. HPC was a big part of that success.

8. Discussion followed about possible **CLG grant projects for 2012:**

- a) Update historic district – hire a consultant to update the 1991 listing
- b) Possible historic marker noting Norwich is listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Nancy to follow up with DHP to see if this is a fundable project
- c) Additional historic districts: Beaver Meadow and Root District that would encompass both schoolhouses. Peter suggested rather than an entire district we should perhaps consider the individual listings for the two School Houses, as was done with the Beaver Meadow Chapel.

There was some feeling that the overall update was not as urgent as (c), and could wait for another year or so for updating the town's historic district. Grant applications will be due in January. Once information re cost etc. for the above has been gathered, another meeting to focus on a specific project will be scheduled for mid-December.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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