

NORWICH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Tuesday August 24, 2021, 9:00am Meeting

The meeting was held at the Norwich Historical Society, 277 Main St, Norwich, VT

Commissioners Present: Maggie Boone, Jess Phelps, Nancy Osgood, Chair, Phil Zea
Anne Silberfarb, and Deb Brien

Also present: Sarah Rooker, Director, Norwich Historical Society
Linda Cook

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Osgood at 9:02am

1. Approve Agenda

Phil Zea moved to approve the agenda and Jess Phelps seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously (5-0).

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Review and approval of the meeting minutes of June 28, 2021

Anne Silberfarb joined the meeting at this time. Anne Silberfarb moved to approve the minutes as circulated, and Jess Phelps seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously (6-0).

4. Discussion of the submission for the NHPC portion of the Norwich Historic Barn Survey

The statement drafted by Phil Zea and former commission member Folger Tuggle was reviewed. Minor amendments were-agreed upon. Jess Phelps will incorporate the agreed changes, and the statement will be forwarded to Lyssa Papazian.

5. Update from the Norwich Historical Society

Sarah explained the goal of the Norwich Fair/Block Party as a community outreach event to welcome all newcomers as well as long-time residents and to highlight the tremendous number of resources in town. Many non-profits and Town departments and commissions and PTOs have been invited and plan to attend. All new property owners since the beginning of the pandemic will be invited via a NHS mailing, which includes over 80 properties/homeowners.

Plans for the annual antique show are moving forward this year, as well as walking tours.

5. Discussion of NHPC's presence at the Norwich Block Party (Norwich Fair) from 1-3pm on Saturday September 11, 2021, at the NHS with the rain date the following day.

Phil Zea and Nancy Osgood will man the NHPC's table, Maggie Boone and her family providing a lively poster identifying the table. Among other things, the NHPC will emphasize its mission and encourage people to participate in our meetings. On the table will be print outs illustrative of the projects the NHPC has undertaken, names of commission members, ways to access Commission projects, National Register information, and information about historic preservation.

7. Discussion of pending items:
a. Next CLG grant ideas

Thetford/Norwich Union Village Historic District idea has received the blessing of Devin Coleman, the state architectural historian for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. There is, however, some property owner resistance in that area. It was agreed that NHPC needs to better understand the origins of such resistance and work to educate property owners as to the benefits and more importantly, lack of drawbacks, to establishing historic districts.

With Rod Francis being appointed interim town manager, he has reservations about the ability of his office to manage a CLG grant proposal this year.

Nancy suggested that we wait until we have Lyssa Papazian's recommendations in her final Barn Survey report as to the next CLG grant application. It was agreed that we should postpone a decision on the next project until our October meeting and perhaps consider foregoing a CLG grant application this year.

b. Historic markers

A marker for the Root District Schoolhouse has been installed. There was discussion as whether individual properties should be marked or only Historic Districts. The consensus is that marking districts is the better course. The NHPC has no funding source for markers so it was suggested that we could explore grants from foundations and other non-profits.

Sarah suggested studying existing markers and their historical accuracy/sensitivity before adding new markers. It was agreed to pause the conversation about markers and leave that to the Norwich Historical Society for the time being.

c. Commission goals

There was lengthy discussion of the NHPC goals and mission. We agreed that a review of our internet presence should be undertaken and a new mission statement drafted. We also agreed that our public presence overall is lacking and needs to be addressed. Phil will initiate a study of our public presence and make a recommendation as to the next steps.

Public outreach was discussed as a means of getting the public more involved in the NHPC. Commission members will endeavor to invite community members to meetings as a step in this direction. This discussion led back to the idea of not pursuing a CLG grant application in 2021 but to perhaps focus our efforts on these "housekeeping" issues instead.

8. Other business

No other business was discussed.

9. Set date and time for next meeting

The next meeting will take place on October 12, 9am at the NHS or October 21, 9am at the NHS, pending the availability of Rod Francis on either of these dates.

10. Adjourn meeting

Deb Brien moved, and Maggie Boone seconded a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:08am.