

NORWICH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting at the Norwich Historical Society
277 Main Street
Norwich, VT 05055

Minutes, Approved
Monday, April 13, 2015

Present: Peter Brink, Vice Chair; Bill Aldrich, Clerk; Anne Silberfarb, Secretary (She joined the meeting part way through.); and members Cheryl Hermann and Nancy Osgood

Also present: Phil Dechert, CLG Coordinator; Judy Brown, Director of the Norwich Historical Society; and Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant, who was retained to do Phase 1 – the Windshield Survey – of the Norwich Comprehensive Historic Sites & Structures Survey

Absent: Stuart White, member; Roger Blake, Advisory Member

Peter Brink called the meeting to order at 10:33.

1. **Minutes of the February 11, 2015** meeting were reviewed. Bill Aldrich moved and Nancy Osgood seconded that the draft minutes of the February 11, 2015, meeting be approved as written. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **Discussion of windshield survey with Lyssa Papazian.** Lyssa reviewed where the project is at present. She said that she was ready to dive in and would begin with research, interviewing, and preliminary photography. The app that Lyssa expects and hopes to use is still being developed by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Association of Historic Preservation Commissions and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Fingers are crossed that the app will be ready by the middle of May. At the moment the photo capability has not been added to the field note feature. It is important that the app be ready soon to be used in Norwich, for the leafing out of trees could compromise the documentation.

Should the app not be available before the end of this month, Lyssa said that she would begin the survey the “old fashion way.” Because of the work she did when she drew up the nomination papers for the Root District and Beaver Meadow Schools to be on the National Register, clusters of homes and other structures near the two schoolhouses have already been photographed. These and any additional photographs can be entered into the data base. She mentioned that she is doing a targeted neighborhood survey for the town of Hartford. She is looking forward to finding parallels with Norwich. Lyssa will focus on research and interviewing for the next few weeks.

Lyssa said she would be looking at maps of Norwich to identify areas in town where she can expect to find older and newer structures. For that purpose Phil supplied Lyssa with the Vermont E-911 map of Norwich as well as a listing of street addresses and names of property owners. He also mentioned that some of the Assessors’ records are available on-line through the Town’s website. The properties in the windshield survey will be identified by street addresses.

Lyssa was also given a copy of the latest history of Norwich as well as a map of the Village Historic District that is already listed on the National Register. To help with the implementation of this project, she and Bill Aldrich will meet within the next 10 days or so, Bill being well steeped in the history of Norwich, knowledgeable about the network of roads, and a very willing chauffeur.

Conversation soon turned to 20th century development in Norwich. Phil mentioned that much of it occurred from the 1950s through the 1970s, with the opening of the Interstate having a profound influence. In the 1980s a number of houses were built on speculation. Today, in part because of new zoning and subdivision regulations to address scattered building outside the downtown, the number of building permits has substantially subsided.

The purpose of this survey is not only to document the architecture of a structure with an approximate date of construction, but also to note buildings or places of historical significance, those that have been repurposed, those that are important because of the individuals who lived there or the events that happened, and those that are or were places for recreation and commerce.

In our wide-ranging discussion of the windshield survey, numerous sites were mentioned including houses designed by Allan Gelbin, homes on Sargent & Huntley Streets, pre-fab houses in Jones Circle, the Hawk Pine neighborhood, Paul Sample's various homes, Lewiston, and recreational areas (Norwich Pool, Huntley Meadow, Gile Mountain, the Appalachian Trail, Altow Ski Area, and Sample's Hill). We suggested that Lyssa get in touch with Bob Fiskens who knows much about the roads and trails in Norwich.

Realizing that such brainstorming is helpful to the success of this project we will meet with Lyssa **on Tuesday, May 5th at 10:30 at the Norwich Historical Society**. Peter Brink will invite others to attend this meeting, which will focus on the evolution of Norwich structures and landscape as they were modified to meet the needs and pleasures of generations of residents.

In the meantime, Lyssa will keep us informed about the progress that is being made with this app, and Peter will draft a statement about this project to be posted on the Norwich ListServ so that members of the community will be aware of what is going on. He will circulate the draft so that we may all comment on it.

Phil will email NHPC members Volunteer Forms so that accurate records can be kept of the hours we spend working with Lyssa on the Windshield Survey. These donated hours are important to our matching requirement for the Certified Local Government Grant that is funding this survey. (CLG matching grants are funded by the National Park Service through the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.)

3. Cycles of Change: Farming in Norwich

- a. Duration of the exhibit. Judy reported that Cycles of Change will be on exhibit until perhaps the end of August, when part of it may be consolidated so that a new exhibit can be put up in one of the rooms. The large map showing the location of the farms in the exhibit has been hung; smaller editions of the map are available for those who wish to drive to the farms (with directions to phone the farmers ahead of time) .
- b. Outreach to the Farmers Market. Judy reported to date NHPC and NHS have had a presence at two Farmers Markets – one on March 14th and the other on April 11th. Both were successful, the first drawing 9 visitors to the Norwich Historical Society, the other only drawing 2 to see the exhibit, but between 20-30 people at the market were delighted to see Ben Silberfarb’s video about farming in Norwich which Judy showed on her computer and were very happy to scoop up Seth Goodwin’s handout written for Cycles of Change documenting the chronology of farming in Norwich.

It was decided that we would continue to test the waters and see how it goes to have a presence at the market when it moves to its Route 5 location. Peter Brink will man the table at the market from 10-noon on May 2nd. Someone will be found to be at the NHS during that time. Peter will again man the table on the 16th of May, 10-noon, and Nancy will be at the NHS that morning. Judy, and hopefully NHS President Jane Korey, will coordinate this with the Market Manager Steve Hoffman and arrange a table. In preparation, Peter will cover the expense in getting the poster that was displayed at our table at the Farmers Market laminated, with Judy having the work done. Judy will also see about getting a NHS banner or sign for the table and will craft a postcard-size handout incorporating one or more photographs of farming in Norwich with a list of NHS events. The handout on the history of farming in Norwich will also be available at the market.

- c. Updated donor panels and financial status. Judy reported that the donor panels have been updated. Phil reported that the financial position of the Exhibit remains the same – in the black.

4. Other business

- a. Peter reported that the Selectboard approved the reappointment of Bill Aldrich and Nancy Osgood for a 3-year term on the NHPC
- b. We discussed the distribution of the walking tour brochure at the Vermont Welcome Centers. Judy will follow through with the necessary payment and oversee the shipping of the brochures. Phil indicated that money is in the NHPC budget for that purpose. Judy will report how many brochures remain once the shipping to the Welcome Centers has been done.

Bill Aldrich moved, and Cheryl Hermann seconded, that the meeting be adjourned, which was at noon.

The next meeting of the Norwich Historic Preservation Commission will be at 10:30 on Tuesday, May 5th at the Norwich Historical Society to discuss the Windshield Survey with Lyssa Papazian.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Osgood, Secretary Pro Tem

APPROVED 11/30/15