

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

Draft Minutes

Monday, November 30, 2015

Approved at meeting July 28, 2016.

Members Present:

Peter Brink, Vice Chair
Bill Aldrich, Clerk
Anne Silberfarb, Secretary
Nancy Osgood, member
Stuart White, member

Colleagues Present:

Phil Dechert, Planning Director
Judy Brown, Executive Director, Norwich Historical Society

Guest:

Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant, who was retained to do Phase 1 – the Windshield Survey – of the Norwich Comprehensive Historic Sites & Structures Survey

Absent:

Cheryl Herman, member
Jane Korey, President, Norwich Historical Society
Roger Blake, Advisory Member

MINUTES:

Peter Brink called the meeting to order at 10:05AM.

With a motion made by Bill Aldrich and seconded by Anne Silberfarb, the minutes of 4-13-15 were approved unanimously (Nancy Osgood had drafted the minutes). With a motion made by Nancy Osgood and seconded by Bill Aldrich, the 5-5-15 minutes were approved unanimously.

The Commission reviewed with Lyssa Papazian, our consultant for the Norwich Windshield Survey, Lyssa's Draft Survey Report with the intention of determining priority additional work, with emphasis on potential National Register District and Multi-Site nominations. The main purpose of the Draft and the discussion was to determine NHPC priorities for submitting requests for matching grants from the Certified Local Government Program to

undertake priority National Register nominations. **The deadline for requests for 2016 CLG grants is this December 18.** The Draft Report does Not list areas in priority order.

The Union Village Historic District (in Thetford and Norwich). This area has great historic/architectural value and may face pressures in the future from new construction. It should be strongly considered for nomination for listing as a district on the National Register. (It is already listed as a district on the Vermont register.) This area includes 8 homes. At present, Norwich does not have an ordinance authorizing local Historic Preservation Overlay Districts. Peter and other members felt that such an overlay district should only be considered if the owners in the area wanted this and took the lead in requesting it. With a National Register designation, the owners in the Union Village area, as well as throughout Norwich, would have the benefit of greater in-depth research about the history and architecture of the area and recognition of its importance. It is possible that, out of such research and recognition, the owners in Union Village may want to learn about the pros and cons of a Historic Preservation Overlay District.

Goodrich Four Corners Historic District (c.1786-1940) would comprise a National Register District of 4 or 5 properties retaining a fine agricultural landscape anchored by the 1786 farm at the corner. It includes the 1937 Root District School (individually listed on the National Register). This small, but important area appears to be eligible for listing as a district on the National Register.

Pompanoosac Historic District (c.1770-1940?) has a rich and varied history based primarily on its industrial activity and the railroad that served it. Nancy Osgood has done a lot of research on the area. It would be complicated, however, in terms of nominating it as a district for the National Register, because of its mixed integrity. There are several individually eligible properties. It is a candidate for an oral history project and for archeological investigation, possibly even being eligible for National Register listing as a district because of archeological significance. The mining and railroad history would be an important part of the study.

Waterman Hill Historic District (c. 1795-1850) There are four properties that would be eligible for National Register designation. Of interest is the family-based agricultural connection between the four houses. The history of the area is rich and worthy of study.

Lewiston Historic District (c.1880-1920) This area is a small cluster of buildings representing Norwich's commercial and railroad history. Further north is the **Hutchinson/Railroad Historic District**, a cluster of 10-12 buildings (related to Lewiston), which also deserves more research. Peter suggested that further documentation of the history of Lewiston might serve to interest Dartmouth College, the owner, in Lewiston's historical significance. Phil has maintained contact with Dartmouth Real Estate Office regarding Lewiston. Phil will seek to arrange a discussion for him and Peter in future with the appropriate staff in the Real Estate Office.

Brigham Hill Historic District (c. 1785-1880) This area is eligible for a Brigham Hill Historic District on the National Register. It consists of four properties at a crossroad: 189

Brigham Hill Road, 185 Brigham Hill Road, 182 Brigham Hill Road and 211 Brigham Hill Road.

Mid-Century Modern Historic District on Pine Street, Spring Pond, Hopson

(c.1953-1974) A starting point for documenting the Mid-Century architecture in Norwich would be to document a National Register Historic District in this area. This could lead to further documentation of this period in Norwich. Lyssa stated that architecture at 30 to 35 years of age is the most frequently destroyed architecture. Documentation in Norwich of Mid-Century Modern architecture would be worthwhile to create awareness of this period and might lead to further appreciation and preservation.

Jones Circle, 1957-62, addition to the Norwich Village Historic District “This very compact, classic mid-20th century suburban infill is a confirmed National Homes development of 11 cottage houses built between 1957 and 1959.” The area could be documented as an amendment to the existing National Register Historic District designation in Norwich. The state would be interested in this project because of the unique “component or factory built construction” used in this development.

Hawk Pine Historic District, 1968-1983 This area's architecture was originated by architect Robert Carl Williams in the development by Hawk Pine Corporation. It includes an Allan Gelbin-designed house. Extensive infill has occurred, however, making listing as a National Register District problematic – although the overall wooded landscape and layout of the area provides a thematic unity.

Potential Individual Properties Most include farms and agricultural complexes as well as preserved 18th and 19th century buildings as well as bridges, cemeteries, trails, and Sample's Jump.

Priorities for Certified Local Governments application: There was a consensus to select four areas in Norwich for the Certified Local Government application due December 18th for FY 2016. In order of priority these are the following. The specific number of grant requests made will depend upon cost estimates for the work and NHPC's capacity to develop the needed matching funds. CLG grants are 60% Federal/State grant and 40% matching funds. Donated work on the project can count as matching funds if properly documented. The projects, in order of priority, are research and writing National Register nominations for the following:

The Union Village Historic District

The Mid-Century Modern Historic District on Pine Tree, Spring Pond, Hopson Roads

The Goodrich Four Corners Historic District (including the Root School, which is individually listed.)

The Pompanoosac Historic District, with emphasis on its potential archeological significance.

Other Business:

Lyssa noted another category of architecture in Norwich that might well be considered in the future. This is the many remarkable properties built between the 1970's and the early 2000's

that are done in earlier Norwich architectural styles – so that they fit most nicely into Norwich’s architectural character. This is a theme to be documented. Several of the builders include: George Porter, Doug Gest, and Peter French.

Lyssa mentioned that she will provide a spreadsheet of all the properties surveyed and all the photographs taken during her Windshield Survey, along with the final report and recommendations.

NHPC will determine a date with Lyssa for a community presentation, probably sometime in January.

With a motion by Nancy Osgood and seconded by Bill Aldrich, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Silberfarb, Secretary