

Kensington Heritage Commission Meeting

March 24, 2021

Minutes

The meeting was held virtually using the Town's Zoom platform. The meeting was posted on the Town's website, so the public was able to attend. Sarah Wiggin, Town Clerk opened the meeting and was present to help as needed. Lynne Monroe hosted the meeting with her email and phone so that anyone who called in or wished to join could have done so easily.

Lynne Monroe read the Checklist to Ensure Meetings are Compliant with the Right-to-Know Law During the State of Emergency.

In Attendance:

Present:

Regular Members: Lynne Monroe, Chair; Elaine Kaczmarek, Secretary; Bob Gustafson, Treasurer and Selectmen's Representative; Steven Mallory, Joni Praded; Mike Schwotzer, Planning Board Representative

Alternate: Frank Whittemore

Absent:

Alternates: Ben Cole, Alan Tuthill, and Meghan Gross

Call to order at 6:18 PM

Minutes

The minutes from the February 24th meeting were reviewed and approved. Mike Schwotzer made the motion to accept, seconded by Frank Whittemore.

Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Members

The board welcomed back Frank Whittemore, Meghan Gross and Steven Mallory who renewed their terms. Alan Tuthill's term expires in April and hopefully will also renew.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS

Grange Hall: The town approved the expenditure of \$15,000 to redo part of the roof, painting, stone work, electric and duct replacement from mouse damage. The Heritage Commission supports the work at the Grange

The Union Meeting House. Mike Schwotzer has arranged for the Congregational Church to act as the "pass through" for the Meeting House which will allow them to collect and hold money as a 501C3 charitable organization until such time as the trustees of the Meeting House obtain that status. (This allows donations to be tax deductible.) The first step is to get a proposal from the steeplejack highly recommended by Steven Mallory. This is the most pressing work needed for the building. Lynne and Steven will be working on a historic building assessment that will define the work needed including cost and priority. This will facilitate planning and fund-raising.

The Town Hall. The town approved the expenditure for a shed to store police equipment in back of the church. Lynne and Frank will be available to help based on their conversation with the police and selectmen.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Board. There was an enthusiastic discussion regarding the need to maintain the town's rural character. Much concern was expressed about wildlife corridors, creating an inventory of open land, and having the Heritage Commission work with the Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Selectmen. The Master Plan will be updated soon and the Heritage Commission will update its chapter beginning with the 1997 survey of historic resources. The landscape should be inventoried as part of this effort. Lynne recommended "Preserving Community Character a Manual for Local Officials."

Free Advice. The Heritage Commission received a request from John and Joan Skewes to help them figure out what to do about their historic barn. Lynne, Steven and Frank met with them at the barn on Drinkwater Road on Sunday afternoon on the 14th. Steven explained that it was essentially a 1770's English barn with later additions. He feels that the later additions are important to maintain and that maintaining the roof will be the most significant part of preserve it. They will return to the farm and create a bullet list of things to repair and suggestions for what to do. Lynne is putting together a history of the farm to better understand the buildings. Steven and Lynne said that this is one of the best things the Heritage Commission can do. The idea is in the article for Community News.

Charrette. Joni reminded the board of the conclusions reached at the charrette. (Some are already happening!) More activities will be planned to support this.

1. Create a Heritage Commission. Done!
2. Work on the Union Meeting House. Happening!
3. Work on the Trails is important to everyone. Trails committee is very active!
4. Make better use of the Grange.
5. Workforce housing is needed.
6. How to make the town center more friendly to the elderly.
7. How to make better use of town buildings.

National Register. Lynne suggested that we nominate The Town Center of Kensington to the National Register of Historic Places. Joni made a motion to support this effort and it was seconded by Steven. Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Frank Whittemore made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm and it was seconded by Steven Mallory. Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Next meeting will be April 28 at 6:15.