

Hi Jane,

A long overdue follow-up to our conversation about Heritage Funds.

I read the RSAs and talked with some other HC chairs around the state. Some towns have gone to town meeting/city council, but the consensus is that you don't have to. You can speak with the city manager and treasurer to set up a non-lapsing account.

**674:44-d Appropriations Authorized. –**

I. A town or city, having established a heritage commission under this subdivision, may appropriate money as deemed necessary to carry out its purposes. The whole or any part of money so appropriated in any year and any gifts of money received pursuant to RSA 674:44-b shall be placed in a heritage fund and allowed to accumulate from year to year. Money may be expended from such fund by the heritage commission for its purposes without further approval of the local legislative body.

II. The town treasurer, pursuant to RSA 41:29, shall have custody of all moneys in the heritage fund and shall pay out the same only upon order of the heritage commission. The disbursement of heritage funds shall be authorized by a majority of the heritage commission. Prior to the use of such funds for the purchase of any interest in real property, the heritage commission shall hold a public hearing with notice in accordance with RSA 675:7.

When it comes to seeding/funding the account, answers are all over the place. Most towns' Heritage Funds are small potatoes, tapped for paying a clerk or matching survey money. Funding comes from the municipal budget, donations, earned income (sales of merchandise, etc.), and in the case of Center Harbor - a portion of all land use change taxes.

It wasn't clear what Laconia charges for demolition permits. It seems like there is a possibility that a percentage of demolition fees could go to the Heritage Fund. I'm reaching out to towns/cities with demolition review ordinances to find out. I'm talking with Manchester tonight.

With a heritage fund, you could buy properties or easements. Wakefield has probably done the most with their heritage fund, using it to step in and acquire at-risk properties. That said, their model goes much further than most in the state and the buildings often become museums. That part probably/definitely isn't right for Laconia. [Home \(historicwakefieldnh.com\)](http://www.historicwakefieldnh.com)

Stratham has also used their fund to purchase easements on various properties. They have an FAQ here: [heritage preservation fund summary.pdf \(strathamnh.gov\)](#)

More soon!

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