

CITY OF LACONIA HERITAGE COMMISSION  
5:00 PM City Hall - Armand A. Bolduc City Council Chamber  
*Draft Minutes*

5/11/2022 - Minutes

1. Call to order

Chair Jane Whitehead called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

2. Salute to the flag

The commission saluted the flag

3. Roll call

Members present: Mark Haynes, Lois Kessin, Catherine Tokarz, Marjory Wilkinson, Scott Ringer, Jane Whitehead

4. Recording secretary

Kalena Graham

5. Staff in attendance

Planning Director Dean Trefethen

6. Acceptance of Minutes from previous meeting

6.1. Acceptance of April 13 minutes

Motion to accept the minutes with the correction noted made by L. Kessin, S. Ringer seconded. All voted in favor.

7. City Council Liaison Report

M. Haynes updated the commission. The appointment committee had a great discussion with HDC chair Tara Shore regarding the Historical Society. He would like her to hear from her at some point. The Council received her presentation very well.

M. Haynes updated the Commission on the mold situation at St. Josephs Church. The damage is extensive and the conclusion can be drawn at what will happen.

M. Haynes noted that a sunset clause on demolition permits is needed. Planning Director D. Trefethen explained the demolition process to the commission. As for St. Jo's the applicant requested the application be put on the table and there for the city has no jurisdiction on a limit. If the City imposed changes that application wouldn't be affected because it came in prior to changes. He brought up the Lakeside application and the city is still waiting on some things from the applicant.

The Commission asked T. Shore to speak about what M. Haynes brought up previously. T. Shore is the

president of the Historical Society and Chair of the HDC. The Historical Society is in process of a huge project for the Laconia County Club's 100 year in business. The Historical Society is looking into another building to have better space for a museum. The goal is to connect with Lakeport and Winnepesaukee. Her take on St. Jo's is that the church is holding the building hostage until it falls to the ground. Money has been offered to fix the mold issue.

## 8. Planning Board update

Planning Director D. Trefethen mentioned a few months ago the Commission signed off on a demolition permit for 59 Clinton and the applicant has since been to the ZBA and Planning board for an artist/craftsman studio. This is in support of the opera house and local groups that might need the space.

## 9. New business

The commission welcomed new full member Marjory Wilkinson. She discussed her background.

### 9.I. Presentation of Laconia Property Enhancement & Preservation Award to Clare and Michael Persson at 43 McGrath Street

C. Tokarz presented the award to Mike and Clair Persson. The Persson's told the background of the house and that they are the third owners since built in 1887.

The Commission is looking to give awards twice a year in hopes to spur more interesting in the existing historical homes.

### 9.II. Discussion of guidelines for design of Heritage Commission logo

The commission is looking to have a public contest, city wide and looking for suggestion on guidelines to follow. T. Shore gave examples of what the Historical Society did for their logo and suggested getting a hold of the person that runs the sled dog races as they do something similar every year. C. Tokarz asked the Commission email her suggestions.

### 9.III. Possible meeting of Lakes Region Heritage Commissions, Saturday May 21

Chair J. Whitehead noted that there has been no response from other regions on where the meeting should be. The meetings are informational for the Commissions to discuss specific issues and solutions. There were a few suggestions that J. Whitehead will look into.

## 10. Old business

### 10.I. 171 Gold Street

Chair J. Whitehead mentioned the tour on Friday went well. She feels however the building is inhabitable, it does have historical importance. She offered an idea: to look at the building as an archeological site. The various layers could be stripped away and date those strata. As they are dated, they can be connected to the history of Lakeport. There are people that do this kind of work and name Peter Brunette as one. The structure housed the first settlers in Lakeport and was the first in the area. She would like the DHR filled out and submitted for the property. S. Ringer asked for a vote to determine whether the commission wants to do that. S. Ringer feels the structure is not of significance and is unsafe. He sees value in what the chair is saying but there is a cost and potential safety hazards involved. L. Kessin asked where the money would come from. Chair J. Whitehead would like to consult the people that do this professionally. She feels it would be valuable to fill out the application for DOE registry just to find out the eligibility value of preserving the history. S. Ringer noted that the demo permit is asking to start June 1-15. Chair J. Whitehead asked what the hurry is to tear the building down.

Atty Shawna Bentley asked if this was the public comment section of the agenda then addressed the Commission. She noted that most construction work starts in the spring and this is a common time of year. Chair J. Whitehead asked if the demolition could be done in chronological phases and have the building studied. She feels it has historical importance. Atty S. Bentley asked if there is a particular authority for that requirement and was told it would go through the Division of Historical Resource where an inventory form is filled out. Atty S. Bentley asked if that would be after the commission decided the building is of significance and was told yes. The current inventory form for Laconia lists the property as the Folsom/Bachelor House and is not eligible, more information needed. So Chair J. Whitehead noted that we need to provide them with more information. Planning Director D. Trefethen asked if it was the Chair's suggestion to apply without the property owner permission or cooperation and was told they would ask for the permission and hope they would have cooperation. S. Ringer asked other than the age of the house what Chair J. Whitehead found historically significant as he didn't see anything architecturally. Chair J. Whitehead thinks if you went down to the joists and rafters, something would be found. Chair J. Whitehead stated the history of the structure is what is important. She read sections from Lakeport's Ancient Homes 1917 from John Aldrich. Atty S. Bentley asked if the reading from the book was noticed. There was some confusion on the question. S. Ringer asked if the commission request to move forward with the application, what is the process and how long does it take and Chair J. Whitehead stated it should be filled out as soon as possible as there are meetings every two weeks. She noted that they may need Mae Williams to help with that and information that the property owner will need to provide as well. S. Ringer asked again for a motion to go forward to determine if the structure is historically significant.

T. Shore noted she has photos and noted the original families and their importance to the city. There have definitely been additions to structure over the years. Atty S. Bentley asked on behalf of the owner she submit that the commission's inquiries limit to the present structure. Considering the architectural details and that should be a consideration of the present structure of the building as it appears. Whether maintaining as is will be a benefit to the community. Chair J. Whitehead said that's not the issue, it's a historic structure and the importance of it is not in it's present condition but in it's history.

T. Shore asked Atty S. Bentley if something is being put in the place of the structure after demo and was told that is not in the scope of the current hearing. The commission is only looking at whether the building has significance. T. Shore gave a brief history of the building. She noted there are two sides of preservation: pure preservation and adaptive use preservation and went over the details of each. She asked if the structure can't be saved, to figure out a way on how the history and importance can be brought to light in a way to be place on the property. She commended the property on the work he has already done in the Lakeport area. Collaborative discussion is needed to continue to grow.

Planning Director D. Trefethen understanding what the Chair wants accomplished, he mentioned the first step is for the commission to determine ie take a vote that the structure is considered a significant building according to the criteria in the ordinance. If it is voted significant then the a public hearing will need to be scheduled at the next meeting and in the meantime you can start doing the negotiations that has been discussed with the applicant. The other option, if the structure is not deemed significant, then the demolition permit is approved and signed and no further action is needed by the commission. In order to do what the Commission is talking about, it will take time and effort on a number of people's parts and the building will need to be declared significant. So the rest of the steps can be legally executed. S. Ringer asked if there is enough in the criteria to deem the structure and not the people. There was concern about who it paying for the work to be done. also had concern about who will pay for all this extra work requested by the chair.

Atty S. Bentley noted that the commission is looking to make a vote. The consideration is of the structure as it stands. The architecture that you can see as it stands. She read the criteria as stated in the ordinance. It is her understanding that the structure has been modified and is not unique or have any architectural interest nor has she heard of any events involving the structure. It sounds like the commission's main concern is to acknowledge the history of the first white settlers that lived there. She also hasn't heard that an event happened on the property only an important person of the community lived in the building. It sounds to her the main concern is that the commission wants to acknowledge the history that took place on that site. She feels that could be separated from the structure itself and that it should be. She noted that it sounds like there have been discussions outside the commission

meeting with involved with one that is in active litigation with the property owner. She noted that there is an assumption being made on what could be found and not what was seen on the site visit to the property. She also feels that in the back of everyone's mind is that the owner has deep pockets and actions are assumed on what the owner might be able to afford when it should be the structure itself being looked at and whether it's significant enough to interfere with a private owner's right to demolish. There are health risks on the people that would be working on the structure if it was reconstructed. Chair J. Whitehead noted that the point of archeology is to dig back and learn the past in things and places and create the connection.

S. Ringer doesn't feel the property falls under the criteria in the ordinance to deem the structure significant. He mentioned they should vote on whether the structure is significant or not.

Motion to vote to put 171 Gold Street on the Division of Historic Resources made by S. Ringer. Atty S. Bentley asked if the commission should vote whether or not the structure is historically significant or not first. L. Kessin wondered if the motion should be to accept the demolition permit. There was discussion on what motion to be made.

Planning Director D. Trefethen reiterated the motions and clarified the voting process.

From M. Haynes perspective he thinks the structure was significant because of the people that lived there. Had the structure been maintained and kept throughout the years it may have been significant. Chair J. Whitehead said it's not just the memory of the people who lived there but the structure.

Motion to determine the structure at 171 Gold Street not historically significant made by S. Ringer, L. Kessin seconded. The motion passed 4-1, M. Haynes, L. Kessin, M. Wilkinson, S. Ringer for: J. Whitehead oppose.

Motion to approve the demolition permit made by L. Kessin, S. Ringer seconded with the recommendation by M. Haynes that the owner that at some point there be some recognition of the importance of the original inhabitants of property. M. Wilkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the demolition permit made by L. Kessin, S. Ringer. The motion passed 4-1, M. Haynes, L. Kessin, M. Wilkinson, S. Ringer for: J. Whitehead oppose.

#### 11. Public comment

#### 12. Other business

C. Tokarz updated the commission on Pumpkinfest on Oct 29. They are looking for volunteers and contact the Chamber of Commerce if interested.

C. Tokarz called BPS for a seismic report for the Lakeport Church. When asked why she wasn't sure what to say. She asked the commission. Planning Director D. Trefethen feels the church should ask for the report and not the commission.

C. Tokarz noted she has a call into the owner at 728 Union.

C. Tokarz asked about forming a subcommittee to identify historically significant homes in the Lakeport area. M. Wilkinson and C. Tokarz volunteered for the subcommittee.

The commission would like the demolition application have more documentation.

#### 13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by M. Wilkinson, S. Ringer seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:38

PM.

Respectfully,

K. Graham

DRAFT