

Lyme Heritage Commission

Minutes - February 23, 2022

PRESENT: Tim Cook, Laurie Wadsworth, Adair Mulligan

ABSENT: Ray Clark, Ben Kilham

PUBLIC: Karen Henry, Judith Timchula, Betsy Uline, Lynn McRae, Lynore Bolton

The meeting began at 7:00 pm with Tim, Laurie, Adair, and Karen present at the Lyme Historians' meeting room and Judith, Betsy, Lynn, and Lynore attending via Zoom.

1. Minutes of the December 2, 2021 meeting – approved
2. Heritage Commission membership/officers – all members' terms have expired and there are also two empty slots on the Commission. Members of the public were invited to contact the Select Board to express interest.
3. Town report – Adair Mulligan has submitted a report to the town office.
4. Lyme Common - Laurie Wadsworth explained that in late 2018, the Select Board appointed a Lyme Common Committee with broad representation that was given a very broad charge and one year in which to fulfill it. They met monthly (with an extension) until the pandemic closed down the effort, discussing landscaping, parking, safety, signage, use of the Common, and structures, delivering a report in 2020 that Laurie felt was incomplete. Since that time, ownership of the road on the back side of the Common was transferred to the Town, without local or committee input, and parking has been proposed. Also, a number of trees were removed all at once with no apparent plan for replacement. This would need coordination with a possible plan to bury power lines around the Common. Discussion revealed agreement that there is a continued need for a Lyme Common Committee to address the many uses of this central shared space. The Commission voted unanimously on a motion by Laurie seconded by Adair to recommend to the Select Board that a new Lyme Common Committee be set up as an on-going body, perhaps with a member liaison to the Lyme Heritage Commission.
5. Status of East Thetford/Lyme Bridge - Repair has been delayed a year, possibly because of supply chain or materials cost problems resulting in no bids from contractors. Karen Henry, a bridge neighbor and registered professional engineer, supports the Commission's position that a bike/pedestrian access be added to the bridge. She said that it could be cantilevered off one side as on the Piermont-Bradford Bridge, where I beams were placed underneath to support the walkway. Karen noted that, for engineers, this Pratt Truss bridge is historically significant. She believes, from conversations with other engineers, that the addition of a walkway is not an engineering problem but one which requires a political solution.

Support for such a walkway needs to come from the Select Board, and should line up with the town master plan's support of multimodal transportation. While having a bike lane nearby would have helped support a bridge walkway, widening either River Road or the East Thetford Road to add such a lane is unlikely. Yet, the 200 signatures gained in two days from bicyclists and pedestrians supporting a walkway is strong evidence that this use exists

even without designated bike lanes. Lynore Bolton suggested a one-lane design with a traffic light. Karen and Tim suggested that the cost of bridge replacement is so significantly higher than repair that it is not likely. Lynn McRae expressed concern about access to East Thetford businesses when the bridge is closed. The Commission voted unanimously on a motion by Laurie, seconded by Tim, to ask the Select Board to contact the state bridge engineer. Adair will draft a letter and send it around to members for comment before sending it to the Select Board.

6. Photo documentation of historic houses – during the pandemic, effort has continued to photo document the interiors and exteriors of several historic houses, including on Franklin Hill and Acorn Hill Roads. Photos are labeled and copied onto a CD which is placed in the Heritage Commission's property file in the Historians' office. Agreed that this effort should continue even for homes that are not currently for sale. Laurie will inquire of willing owners.
7. Meeting adjourned 8:01pm