

Newington Historic District Commission (HDC) – FINAL Minutes

Tuesday April 17, 2018

3:30 p.m.

Town Offices

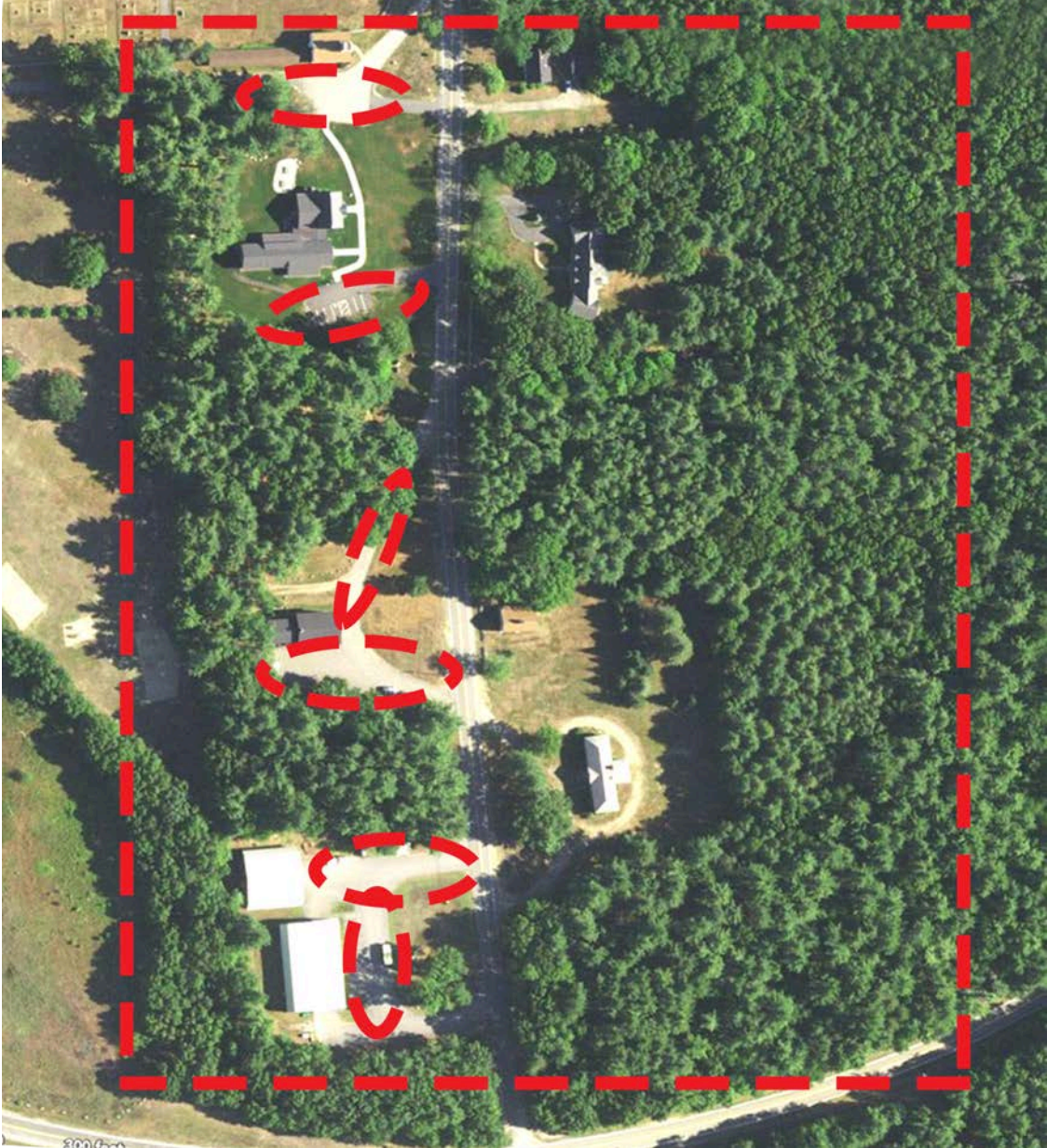
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ted Connors Member (2020) Selectmen representative ✓ Christopher Cross Member (2020) Elaina D’Orto Member (2018) ✓ Edna Mosher Member (2021) John Lamson Member (2018) ✓ Lulu Pickering Member (2020) Maxine Mintz Pottier Member (2020) NellAnn Hiatt Alternate (2020) Victoria Eversman Alternate (2020)
Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Director Lara Croft • Library Trustees Steven Bush and Peter Welch
Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of last meeting were not approved, need more people who attended the meeting to review them.
Plan for the old town center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bring everyone up to date, Lulu Pickering reviewed the progress that has been made to date on a plan to improve the old town center, make it more people friendly, and improve its aesthetics. • This plan is an Appendix to the HDC minutes and will be updated as input is received. • Edna Mosher agreed to contact the Cooperative Extension at UNH to see if a forester is willing to walk around the historic district and give advice on which trees could be kept and which ones removed. • The next HDC meeting will include a walk around the area to gather input and suggestions. • To engage all the relevant groups (Meetinghouse deacons, Library trustees, Historical Society members, HDC members, Selectmen Board, Recreation Board) in the process, Ted Connors discussed have a meeting to launch the project for improving the old town center, discussing options, and soliciting input.
Library parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lara Croft and Peter Welch discussed their desire for additional parking at the library – see Appendix Plan.

Library lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two additional walkway lights were approved for the Langdon Library with little discussion, except that the additional lights should match the existing ones – Motion by Ted Connors, seconded by Chris Cross, unanimous approval.
Historic Resources in Newington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edna Mosher expressed concern about a vase and paintings in the Langdon Library that have value and how these items should be displayed/secured. The HDC has no authority in this regard. The “Friends of the Library” group(?) is defunct, so the authority over these resources likely rests with the Library Trustees. Edna Mosher expressed interest in the Old Town Hall museum and whether some items in it have value, or not. These artifacts were donated to the Newington Historical Society, which is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. The HDC and Town of Newington have no authority over these resources. Lulu Pickering suggested that a first step is an inventory of the existing historic resources because no one really knows what currently exists or its provenance. Often the value of something is where it came from and who owned it, not an actual market value. Ted Connors would like to have some historic artifacts hung in the Town Office building to improve all the “white walls.” Ted Connors proposed a “kick-off” meeting with relevant groups to see how the historic resources in Town could be better managed for everyone’s benefit. Board members felt that it makes no sense to have town buildings, such as the Old Parsonage and Old Town Hall museum, locked and inaccessible to townspeople 99% of the time.
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunications proposal on Sprague property – Section 106 comments request by EBI Consulting. Chris Cross will draft a letter in response to the March 29th EBI letter requesting our comments about the project’s potential impacts on historic properties. Many historic resources reports exist at NH DHR that cover the proposed area on Shattuck Way that EBI can use. The most significant ones are (1) the Newington Railroad Depot (8 acres) listed on the National Register of Historic Places and part of Newington’s Historic Districts and (2) the old Shattuck Shipyard.

Lulu Pickering
HDC Member
May 10, 2018; Finalized June 19, 2018

APPENDIX – 2018 Project Plan for the Old Town Center

Beautification of the Historic District and Creation of a Peoples Center

<p>Goal</p>	<p>Townfolk love Fox Point for its park-like environment, scenic views, and historic/ agricultural ambience. Our goal is to make the old Town Center a more people-friendly place with natural areas for people to sit, hike, and enjoy themselves. The intent is to not only beautify the Old Town Center but to make it more accessible and used by townfolk. At the same time, the intent is also that the Town will maintain the new areas, including any planted trees, bushes, flower gardens, etc. The area under discussion is the town-owned property shown inside the rectangle on the map (excluding the private property).</p>
<p>Map</p>	

<p>Parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The map shows that there is already a significant amount of asphalt-covered land (red ovals) by the Church, Library, Old Town Hall, and Town Garage. The HDC favors keeping the existing green spaces and not expanding existing parking lots or adding more lots. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Library Trustees would like to extend the paved parking lot by the library in 2019. ○ Library Director monitors the parking area by her office and says it often fills up. She does not monitor the Meetinghouse lot. ○ Library Trustee Peter Welch does not favor signage to let patrons, who don't mind walking, know they can use the Meetinghouse lot. ○ The HDC requests that the totality of this plan first be developed before a decision is made on parking. • The most intense parking in the old town center occurs in the fall when recreational soccer is active. A hundred or more people come to the games and practices and park in the parking areas or along Nimble Hill Road by the Old Town Hall, Old Parsonage, Old Stone School, and Library. The HDC favors widening the shoulder(s) along the road using gravel so cars can more easily park on a level surface. When events are not occurring the wider shoulders will make it safer for pedestrians, dogs, kids, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Cross discussed alternatives to gravel, which involved concrete with holes for grass to grow and fill in, for leveling the road shoulders for more parking. Peter Welch was concerned about maintenance, and Ted Connors about maintenance and cost. • If more parking is needed, the HDC favors adding more gravel to the circular driveway that surrounds the Old Stone School and leveling it so cars can park around it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Cross discussed adding several small micro-lots around the whole area that could each accommodate only a couple of vehicles. Ted Connors was concerned about cost and maintenance. • The large rocks by the Old Town Hall keep vehicles off the grassy area. More rocks should be added so cars do not pull right up to the right wall of the Old Town Hall to park on the grass there.
<p>Lighting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "Main Street" concept is intriguing for the section of Nimble Hill Road in the Historic District (e.g., the Old Parade). The roadway could be lined with historic lights to add ambience and light the way for evening events.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lighting should be consistent across the various parking lots and roadway to provide the same “look and feel” no matter where you are. <p><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library proposal to add two additional lights on their walkway was approved, the new lights are to match the existing ones.
Tree cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once tall pines are removed, it should be possible to see which of the remaining hardwood trees should be saved for branching out and growing. Oaks and maple will add beautiful fall color and help create a park-like environment. Selective pine tree cutting should be done around the Old Parsonage and Old Stone School. Getting circulating air around the north side of the Old Parsonage will help with the moisture/mold problem. All of the tall pine trees on the west side of Nimble Hill Road could be removed. They add nothing to the beauty of the area and pose a hazard to buildings during a storm. <p><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A forester from UNH Cooperative Extension can give suggestions about selective tree cutting. Phased cutting is an option so some trees have a chance to bush out and grow before others are selected for removal. Need winter color, so maybe do not create solely a hardwood park.
Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The border with Pease/Arboretum Drive is a problem. Trees do need to be thinned so the remaining ones can bush out. At the same time, a visual buffer needs to exist to block the Pease Airport District from the Old Town Center. Suggestions on quick growing hedges, arboretum trees, rhododendrons, lilacs, etc. are needed to see which will survive the deer and become effective screens. Flowering trees should be planted for color – apple trees as in old Newington orchards? The line of trees by the cemetery fence could be extended past the church, library, and old town hall to add beauty and shade in the summer. <p><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A forester from UNH Cooperative Extension can give suggestions. Need winter color, so maybe do not create solely a hardwood park. Watering is an issue. The line of maples near the cemetery fence have not done especially well in the gravel soil, with some already dying.

<p>Stonewalls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West and South sides of the rectangle in the map surrounding the Old Town Center should be marked, preferably with a stonewall that adds an historic feature. A few old stones still exist behind the library. The area should be walked to investigate. • Alternatively, a granite post and chain fence already exists in the south part of the cemetery and something similar could be used.
<p>Visual Features</p>	<p>✓ Currently, the bright summer sun and nowhere to sit limit outside activities. Visual features need to be added and people spaces designed with seating to encourage spending time outside.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intent is to beautify the Old Town Center to make it more accessible and people friendly. At the same time, though, the intent is also that the Town will maintain the new areas, including any planted trees, bushes, flower gardens, etc. <p><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></p> <p>F1 – Library rain garden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No one is really overseeing the garden and the plants have not flourished. Lillian Wilson has been weeding it (Thank you!). As is, the garden does not add much functionally or aesthetically to the area. ○ Recommend new plantings (not cattails) that can tolerate wet. Perhaps birches as in historic photos? Pussy willows? A seating arrangement with stones? <p>F2 – Library patio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A picnic table is put on the patio each summer. ○ Bright sun is an issue; how to shade? <p>F3 – Veterans monument area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This visual feature could be improved with a flagstone patio with drainage, a surrounding rock wall of some sort, and spots to sit on the rocks or other seating. <p>F4 – Meetinghouse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Needs more than the stone for mounting a horse. ○ For weddings or events, there is no outside feature or conveniences for enjoying the area or for photo opportunities.
<p>Trails and markers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, the Old Town Hall and soccer field provide recreational activities in the old town center. • Distinct trails could be laid out in various areas with educational trail markers.

Building Use	<p><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As part of this plan, better use of some of the buildings should be considered.○ If townspeople cannot access certain buildings most of the time, what is the point of having museums like the Old Town Hall or Old Parsonage. Preserving history for the future is great but people should also be able to enjoy the resources today.
---------------------	--