

# Newington Historic District Commission – FINAL Minutes

Tuesday May 15, 2018

3:30 p.m.

OLD TOWN HALL

Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ted Connors                      Member (2020)</li><li>✓ Christopher Cross                Member (2020)</li><li>Elaina D’Orto                        Member (2018)</li><li>John Lamson                         Member (2018)</li><li>✓ Edna Mosher                        Member (2021)</li><li>✓ Lulu Pickering                      Member (2020)</li><li>Maxine Mintz Pottier                Member (2020)</li><li>NellAnn Hiatt                         Alternate (2020)</li><li>Victoria Eversman                    Alternate (2020)</li></ul>
Walkabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intermittent showers but a very pleasant walk around the old town center. New observations for the 2018 Project Plan are in color in the Appendix below, which will be updated as meetings occur.</li></ul>


Lulu Pickering

HDC Member

May 17, 2018; Finalized June 19, 2018

**APPENDIX – 2018 Project Plan for the Old Town Center (as of April 2018)**

**Beautification of the Historic District and Creation of a Peoples Center**

<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p>Townsfolk love Fox Point for its park-like environment, scenic views, agriculture, and historic rural 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 below (excluding the private property).</p>
<p><b>Map</b></p> <p>The rectangle outlines the area under discussion.</p> <p>The red ovals show existing asphalt parking areas.</p> <p>The green numbers refer to areas discussed in the text below.</p>	 <p>The map is an aerial photograph of a wooded area with several buildings and parking lots. A large red dashed rectangle outlines the entire project area. Within this rectangle, 15 green numbers (1-15) are placed to identify specific areas of interest. Red dashed ovals are drawn around several of these areas, indicating existing asphalt parking areas. The numbers are distributed as follows: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. The area is mostly covered in dense green trees, with some buildings and paved surfaces visible.</p>

<p><b>Parking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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"> <li><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Library Trustees would like to extend the paved parking lot by the library in 2019.</li> <li>○ Library Director monitors the parking area by her office and says it often fills up. She does not monitor the Meetinghouse lot.</li> <li>○ Library Trustee Peter Welch does not favor signage to let patrons, who don't mind walking, know they can use the Meetinghouse lot.</li> <li>○ The HDC requests that the totality of this plan first be developed before a decision is made on parking.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• 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"> <li><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chris Cross discussed alternatives to gravel that involve 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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• If more non-roadside 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"> <li><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Lighting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The lighting should be consistent across the various parking lots and roadway to provide the same "look and feel" no matter where you are.</li> </ul>

	<p><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Library proposal to add two additional lights on their walkway was approved, the new lights are to match the existing ones.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape planting to add color</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Old Town Hall (Map area #1)</b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Area in front of the Old Town Hall has some small plants and wooden containers. Who to contact to discuss? What is their goal?</li> <li>○ Lilac by the Old Parsonage looks beautiful in bloom. Similar plantings could be added to the Old Town Hall lawn.</li> <li>○ What happened to the stone in memory of Jack Mazeau? Ask Linda.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access to Water</b></p>	<p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The library lawn is beautiful due to its recent planting, good maintenance, and watering system.</li> <li>● The soccer field in the summer and fall can be very dusty and dry. The grass dies for lack of water. Can the water system in the cemetery be extended? Or water from the Old Town Hall be extended?</li> <li>● New plants, shrubs, or trees will do better if watered and cared for.</li> <li>● Edna Mosher has been advised that the grass should be dug out many feet from around the tree trunks and the area mulched deeply, but not burying the trunk.</li> <li>● Chris Cross thinks water may not be needed if the trees are properly mulched and fed (manure).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Selective Tree cutting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Selective pine tree cutting should be done around the Old Parsonage and Old Stone School.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Map area #2</b> front of Old Stone School (OSS); 3 big pines and likely one of the hardwoods to be removed.</li> <li>○ OSS Deed has many restrictions, selectmen want to see if some of them can be removed.</li> </ul>

- **Map area #5** Getting circulating air around the north side of the Old Parsonage will help with the moisture/mold problem. The wind should be able to blow through here. Some pines and one leaning hardwood could be removed.
- **Map area #4** New Road is a nice path through the woods that is getting crowded out with deadwood and debris. Wonderful hardwood trees exist along the road and into the woods behind the Old Stone School. Good natural growth of hardwood trees are scattered here and there. A multi-year project, but the dead wood, debris, and low branches should be removed around select hardwood trees that are marked for keeping and growing. Trails through the woods would be wonderful.
- **Map area #6** front of Town Garage; nice grass from the construction phase; lovely hardwoods already exist in the copse on the lawn but need to be thinned so the remaining trees can thrive.
- Many of the tall pine trees on the west side of Nimble Hill Road could be selectively removed.

***Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:***

**Map area #7** between the Library and Old Town Hall

- Existing stonewall can be built out.
- Some fantastic hardwood trees are in this area that can be selected for growth by removing the nearby pines and smaller trees.
- Clear out fallen debris, low hanging trees limbs, and designate trails.
- Phased plan of cutting is suggested. Talk to the UNH forester.

**(Map area #9) behind the library**

- Some hardwood trees exist along the cemetery/library boundary that could be selected for growth by removing the nearby pines and smaller trees.

**Map area #3** between the Town Garage and Old Town Hall is not a first priority for spending money but should be included in the overall plan.

- Existing stonewall can be built out.
- The area could be restored for (1) trails by removing dead wood, branches, and thinning trees; (2) for recreational purposes if parts are cleared – volleyball court? badminton court? A water feature for the summer recreational program? (3) no one in town has expressed any interest in a dog park.

***Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:***

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A forester from UNH Cooperative Extension can give suggestions about selective tree cutting.</li> <li>○ Phased cutting is an option, so some trees have a chance to bush out and grow before others are selected for removal.</li> <li>○ Need winter color, so maybe do not create solely a hardwood park.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tree planting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Flowering trees should be planted for color – apple trees as in old Newington orchards?</li> <li>● <b>Map area #12</b> – 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.</li> </ul> <p><i><b>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A forester from UNH Cooperative Extension can give suggestions.</li> <li>○ Need winter color, so maybe do not create solely a hardwood park.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Old Parsonage flowering trees (Map #15)</b></li> </ul> <p><i><b>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The grass lawn extends behind some fir trees, which are dense and block the back area.</li> <li>○ Consider removing some? all? of the firs and planting with trees that are colorful in spring, yield fruit for deer, and are pleasant to sit under. Perhaps Newington heritage apple trees, peach trees? What else did oldtimers used to ship by rail to the Boston markets? Every old farm used to have an orchard, lilacs, etc. You can still see the blooms in unexpected places on the wildlife refuge.</li> <li>○ Area probably not suitable for a community garden, because there is little loam and lots of gravel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stones</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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. Old stones still exist in a wall behind the library (<b>Map area #9</b>).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternatively, a granite post and chain fence already exists in the south part of the cemetery and something similar could be used.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small stockpile of stones exists in <b>Map Area #5</b> behind the Old Parsonage. These stones originally came from the Celestica site on Pease.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Map area #5</b> has a double stone wall that is quite wide. It looks great. Some of the rocks can be reused elsewhere, because the stonewall does not have to be so wide. Extending the stonewall that was built by the Old Parsonage in other areas along the road would be great.</li> <li>○ Chris Cross has been seeding and mowing to encourage more grass to grow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visual Features</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b></p> <p><b>F1 – Library rain garden and horse drinking fountain (Map #14)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Recommend new plantings (not cattails) that can tolerate wet. Perhaps birches as in historic photos? Pussy willows? A seating arrangement with stones?</li> <li>○ <b>Patty Borkland has been maintaining the flowers in the fountain but someone else needs to volunteer (May 15 HDC walkabout).</b></li> </ul> <p><b>F2 – Library patio (Map #10)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Picnic table(s) are put on the patio each summer.</li> <li>○ Bright sun is an issue; how to shade?</li> </ul> <p><b>F3 – Veterans monument area (Map #8)</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paul Pelletier made some cradles. Len Thomas and ?? helped to install them under the canon wheels.</li> </ul> <p><b>F4 – Meetinghouse lawn (Map #11)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For weddings or events, there is no outside feature or conveniences for enjoying the area or for photo opportunities.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Needs more than the stone for mounting a horse. <b>The stone could be surrounded by crushed rock, flowering shrubs, greenery to enhance its appeal.</b></li> <li>○ Lawn needs a “wagon hill” type feature to climb on or for photos.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Discussed at the May 15 HDC walkabout:</i></b></p> <p><b>F5 – Horsesheds (Map #13)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Horsesheds are a very unique historical feature. Perhaps clear out some and provide seating, hanging historic artifacts, signage to encourage people to enjoy being inside them.</li> <li>○ A beautiful stonewall already exists across from the horsesheds that should be more prominently featured – especially for photos and events.</li> <li>○ The trees in this corner could be removed and the ground leveled so a tent could be erected for those wishing to hold events in this area – weddings, funeral receptions, music events, plays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Trails and markers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Currently, the Old Town Hall and soccer field provide recreational activities in the old town center.</li> <li>● Distinct trails could be laid out in various areas with educational trail markers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building Use</b></p>	<p><b><i>Discussed at the April 17 HDC meeting:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As part of this plan, better use of some of the buildings should be considered.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul>