

**Hooksett Heritage Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, September 19, 2023**

**5:00PM**

**Head School**

**16 Pleasant St. Hooksett, NH 03106**

**Attendance:**

**Commission Members:** Tony Lacasse (Chair), Leslie Madison (Vice-Chair), Vickie Desharnais (Alternate Member), Andrea Therrien (Member), Ruth Knowles (Head School Society Liaison)

**Members of the Public:** Diane Valade (Hooksett Historical Society), Abby Milonas (Hooksett Resident), Sherrin Bull (Hooksett Resident), Mark Ewert (Hooksett Resident), Marilyn Pelletier (Granddaughter of Charles Hardy, author of Hooksett Historical Sketches), Violet Lloyd (Hooksett Resident), Heather Lloyd (Hooksett Resident), Heather Rainier (Hooksett Public Library Director), Jane Martina (Adult Services Librarian, Hooksett Public Library), Bob Thinnes (Hooksett Historical Society), Barbara Thinnes (Hooksett Resident)

Tony called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

Ruth gave a brief introduction to Head School and the new mannequins.

The Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, August 15th were not approved. At the next meeting on October 17, 2023, both the August and September minutes will be voted on for approval.

**Appointments:** Tony Lacasse appointed Jane Martina as the Staff Support Member for the Heritage Commission.

**Reimbursements:** Leslie Madison provided a brief update on the invoice for the memorial bench and made a motion to reimburse Bob Schroder in an amount that is not to exceed \$800 for Kathie Northrup's memorial bench. The motion was seconded by Vickie. The motion passed 5-0-0.

**Heritage Commission Open Positions:** Tony Lacasse reviewed the open positions on the Heritage Commission. There are currently 5 member positions open and 4 alternate

positions open. Tony discussed the responsibilities of what the positions entail, which include attending the Heritage Commission's monthly meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, and the member must be a Hooksett resident. Members also have the ability to become more involved on subcommittees and on special projects. Leslie discussed Hooksett Heritage Commission membership outreach initiatives that she has done on social media. Tony asked Leslie and Vickie Desharnais if they would be interested in serving as the Hooksett Heritage Commission Vice Chair. Tony briefly discussed the responsibilities associated with the Vice Chair position, which Leslie has already been doing. **Tony made a motion to nominate Leslie Madison for the role of Vice Chair for the Hooksett Heritage Commission. The motion was seconded by Vickie. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

**Hooksett Old Town Hall Subcommittee:** Leslie Madison, Tony Lacasse, and Jim Sullivan put together a proposal for Town Council in regard to a plan for the Old Town Hall. The proposal is requesting to use \$250,000 of ARPA funds to create a welcome center in the old library, a museum in the addition, and to renovate the Old Town Hall to create a multiuse building. Leslie gave a brief history of the proposal and mentioned that Leann McLaughlin is working on an RFP. The goal is for this project to start in March or April of 2024. Given the scope of this project, Heather suggested that the Heritage Commission look into fundraising and grant writing opportunities. Tony agreed that the Heritage Commission should begin looking for volunteers to join a separate committee that would be responsible for fundraising and grant writing.

**Arah Prescott Historical Library/Museum Plan:** The Hooksett Heritage Commission, Hooksett Historical Society, and the Hooksett Public Library have been working on this project. Currently, the Historical Society and the Library are working on inventorying and documenting the materials in the Historical Society building. Heather mentioned that Library Staff will be moving the items from the Historical Society to the Library. Bob Thinnes is working with a Library staff member on the inventory. Heather discussed that Library staff are creating a historical archive for the paper materials in the Library's

archive. The Library will prioritize the items currently in their collection and the Historical Society's materials in a proper manner. Heather mentioned the Library's digital archive. Bob gave a thank you to Jamie L'Italien for all of her hard work on this project. Jamie and Bob will be working on the inventory and articles for the history book. Bob mentioned that they are looking for volunteers to help with the inventory and that they need help identifying people in the collection's photographs. The goal is to have the Historical Society's building cleaned out by Light Up the Village, so that storytime can be held in the original Library Building. Bob raised concerns regarding work that needs to be done to the floor in addition to the cleanliness of the building. Tony mentioned that the Heritage Commission will do a deep clean of the building before Light Up the Village.

**Rules/Procedures/Meetings:** Tony will discuss this with Jane at another time.

**Member Binders:** Tony will discuss this with Jane at another time.

**Head School Checking Account:** The Head School Society will turn their checking account money over to the Heritage Commission. All bills and invoices will go through the Heritage Commission. Ruth Knowles and Vickie Desharnais mentioned that they make the Head School available to the schools for the 1840s living history program. They are looking for volunteers to help keep the program going. Tony mentioned that invoices from the Garden Club and the Charter Schools will also go through the Heritage Commission Chair.

**Resignation:** After 8 months on the Heritage Commission, Andrea Therrien announced her resignation. Andrea thanked everyone and expressed her interest in becoming more involved with the Heritage Commission in the future. Bob Thinnes thanked her for bringing so many ideas and asked to stay in touch.

**History Book Project:** Leslie Madison provided an update on the History Book Project.

In 2019, \$75,000 was appropriated to create a new town history book that will cover 1969 to the present day. In July, Vickie Desharnais started a book club that read and discussed the original book. Vickie mentioned that they are having their second meeting on October 12th at 6:00 PM at the Hooksett Public Library. After the first book club meeting, Vickie and Leslie met to discuss a framework for the project. They set the following deadlines at that meeting: Research and gather photos from September 2023 - March 31, 2025 and create a layout and flow for the book from April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025. The project needs to be completed by June 2027. Leslie shared that she researched writers for this project and has created a proposal to recommend Melissa Moore, who wrote "Land of the Low Hills" for this project. Melissa came recommended by the NH Historical Society. Leslie shared the pricing that is included in her proposal for Melissa Moore. The pricing includes: \$42,000 for writing costs, \$1,000 for author signings, and \$25,000 for printing and editing costs for 2,000-2,500 books. That leaves \$5,500 left over to consider printing the books in hardcover, adding color photos, and for taking other creative liberties. Discussion followed in regard to the idea of making "Hooksett Historical Sketches" Volume 1 and the new book Volume 2. Bob Thinner raised a question about including information that is pre-1969 in an addendum at the beginning of the book. Tony mentioned that the Heritage Commission should be mindful to make sure that the Commission is including all elements of our history and putting a priority on those in the Hooksett community that could add valuable insights. Discussion occurred in regard to the design and artwork of the book. Tony shared that another town had a local artist paint a beautiful rendering of their town to use as the cover art for their town history. Tony suggested that we reach out to local artists and/or have a cover art contest. A suggestion was made to involve the schools, as well. Leslie volunteered to reach out to Leann McLaughlin about moving forward with this project. **Tony motioned to have the Hooksett Heritage Commission hire author Melissa Moore to research and write the new Hooksett Historical Book. The motion was seconded by Andrea. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

**Hooksett Village Map:** Leslie Madison shared a map that she created to aid in the

Hooksett Village Walking Tours. Leslie collaborated with Jim Sullivan regarding which historical locations should be included on the map. Leslie and Jim selected locations that they thought would be of interest to Hooksett residents. The new map is the beginning of a phased project that will occur over the next 4-5 years. To coincide with the map, the Hooksett Heritage Commission would like to implement historical markers

similar to the Riverwalk Markers. The goal is to create 17 historical markers that can be used for self-guided tours, guided tours, and school trips. Tony Lacasse mentioned that the Heritage Commission has funds for this project that will bring life back to the downtown village. Currently, the Heritage Commission is looking for volunteers to research the historical sites and to write histories for the markers. Tony shared that the markers will include QR codes that will redirect viewers to a website with more information. Abby Milonas mentioned that Survey123 is a free program that can be used to make digital walking tours. Abby volunteered to begin working on a digital walking tour. Leslie has worked on getting quotes for the printing costs associated with the maps. Tony would like to have the map both in print and digitally.

**Recruitment for New Members:** Tony Lacasse asked to have anyone that is interested in volunteering to contact him or Leslie Madison.

**Junior Heritage Commission Program:** Leslie Madison shared that she found that other Heritage Commission's have a Junior Commissioner Program. Leslie has put a post out on Facebook to gauge interest in creating a similar program. Leslie shared that this can be a relaxed program with the purpose of involving kids in local history. Once a kid has volunteered four times for the Junior Commission, they will become an official commissioner and receive a pin of recognition, at the end of the school year.

Discussion occurred in regard to the Heritage Commission sponsoring a History Club at the Hooksett Schools. From the discussion, the Heritage Commission decided on the following action items: Vickie Desharnais will contact Hooksett History Teachers, and Violet Lloyd will send an email to her school principal.

**Review the Duties of the Staff Contact for the Heritage Commission:** Tony Lacasse suggested that the Heritage Commission, Heather Rainier, Jane Martina, and the town administration meet to discuss the staff support member's duties. Tony would like the staff support member to create the Agenda, prepare for the monthly meetings, and to take the meeting minutes.

**Light Up the Village:** Tony Lacasse shared updates from last week's subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, September 13th. Light Up the Village is scheduled for Friday, December 1, 2023 from 5:00 - 9:00 PM. There will be a tree lighting at Robie's, carolers, food, a holiday concert at the church, Santa, and storytime at the library. The next subcommittee meeting will be on September 27, 2023. Tony mentioned that they have a Facebook group where a schedule of events will be posted, as well as any event updates. Tony mentioned a need for volunteers and asked interested volunteers to reach out to him. Discussion occurred regarding whether the votes from the subcommittee meeting were valid. It was decided to revisit those votes at the next Heritage Commission meeting. Due to its success, Leslie suggested that Light Up the Village should be a subcommittee. Leslie recommended that Tony go to the Town Council to ask to make it a non-profit standing committee.

**Tony moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 PM. Vickie seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0-0.**