

Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2024
Eureka Community Center, 6:00pm

Meeting called to order 6:03 pm

I. Establish a quorum

Quorum established

II. In attendance

Present: Emily Alexander, Secretary, David McLellan, Candace DeCsipkes, Sandra Hilton,
Alternate Absent: Lois Kilby-Chesley, Chair, Paula Erdmann-Purdy
Guests: Heather Roy to conduct board member report

III. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from November 14, 2024

Seconded

All in favor

IV. Information and Reports (no vote necessary)

1. Survey discussion notes under section VI. New Business

V. Continuing Business

A. Vision

Motion to postpone discussion of future vision, role until January

Seconded

All in favor

B. Legal Memo

1. Missing language something is dangerous buildings
2. 1500ft
 - a. Seems extreme, challenge to enforce
 - b. Where do we draw the line? What is acceptable? Line of sight, vegetative barriers, visual blocking. The Historic District's 1500ft shouldn't be scrapped. Only 1500 ft floating zones need revaluation
 - c. DHDC should be included in the conversation work collaboratively with any bodies determining these parameters

Heather Roy says legally there is conflict in whom the decision makers are over the historic structures, this should be written within the ordinances.

e.g. Conservation operates as an advisory board providing recommendations and guidance, there is processes in place

Question: open conversation about the DHDC role within the group or check in with the Select Board

If we were decision makers we are obligated to give input within 30 days Proposed this group probably shouldn't be decision makers in a formal regard

Motion DHDC should reach out to Select Board to seek a time in 2025 to define the role of DHDC

Second

All in favor

Heather reports town lawyer is willing to hold a workshop, intended a round table, with the DHDC and the Select Board

Lawyer asks what the application process looks for a homeowner or builder

MHPC Guidelines for the Certified Local Government

1. Designation is for groups similar to DHDC
2. This would be an application that the town of Durham puts to Augusta that would answer questions that have been brought up in recent months
3. There is financial advantages for this designation

Motion made to add to the DHDC to do list that we set a goal to submit the DHDC to MHPC Certified Local Government program

Seconded

Discussion

Changes made to bylaws within our group would be subjected to approval from Augusta

Could be advantageous for getting grants

This provides a pathway to explain as to how we are qualified

We would be a certified by the state of Maine, anyone new would need to get trained

No timeline except to consider it in the coming year

Good way to provide parameters to members of the commission

Architectural survey is required in the application process for the certification in order to have to exist, to acknowledge

All favor

C. Margaret Gaertner

Margaret will review any existing town archives including previous survey

Correspondence done in email

Towns of Yarmouth and Bowdoinham have done similar surveys, 2025 budget for project - were discussed as example projects

Voluntarism vs professional input-

Durham has over 350 buildings

What would voluntarism look like? What is the appropriate number of volunteers and that would go into the proposal to the Select Board?

- Survey includes photograph and page of information
- Survey broken down by neighborhood, region, tax map, square mile
- She would train everyone, how to photograph

Difference between archeological and architectural

Sustainably different includes archeological maps and potential dig sites

There is history and prehistory, looking at resources that aren't buildings

Architectural survey would not include cemeteries or cattle pond or rock walls

What is the recommendation for those resources that aren't structures

Answer needs to be provided: Would Margaret be willing to compile a report based on the Reval data. Waiting on Margaret's reply as of this meeting.

VI. New Business

Summation from the meeting: the Select Board is open to hearing what is to be accomplished by the DHDC in the next 18 months budget work from Jan 2025 - June 2026

DHDC should submit a budget proposal

-The Select Board wants to understand what our budget is and why we need that amount of money

-The Select Board needs justification

-The Select Board is looking for the DHDC guidance on the survey

Why 50 years?

Is professional standard

Durham's comp plan the need for an architectural survey is desperately needed and a lack of survey is mentioned several times, to protect these resources they need to know where they are

The deadline the Select Board needs our number and our justification by mid-January for the survey

Proposed scope: two pages including an executive summary illustrating need, list parameters, final number

The Select Board is reaching out to the Greater Portland of Governance on the DHDC behalf to see if the architectural survey can be piggy-backed on to 2027 Reval. If there is a reason to wait, include it within the proposal.

Questions:

12. Whole town is geographical area of focus in architectural survey-geographical area

13. 50 years or older
14. Reconnaissance - exclusive to exteriors
15. Waiting on vetting the hired until we are at that stage
16. DHDC coordinates, hired qualified professional will do the admin work
17. 15-25 volunteers to get trained and conduct survey
18. Budget of Town of Durham, Taxpayer dollars (suggestion: not conduct this survey prior to 2026 because we have missed the October deadline. For applying for grants specific to historic surveys (70/30 grant). Grants allow for a volunteer base to conduct these surveys
19. Public relations will be the responsibility of the DHDC to organize, utilizing town outlets
*GPCOG helps with these specific
20. Proposal will be two pages

Motion to approve the answers to the questions historical survey clarifying question

Seconded

All In Favor

Motion that the execution of survey happen in the spring of 2026 with a grant application process to happen in October 2025

Seconded

Discussion

This two page, in mid-January, doc goes to SB so it can be at the town meeting. If town votes no this does not move forward. If it goes through May-October our focus will be applying for the grants.

All In Favor

Renting out the Eureka and hold a breakfast for the volunteers

Phippsberg's survey had about 20 volunteers, 7 teams with 2-3 members and given tax map region- 415 properties, found 255

Complied in a shared document to be reviewed by the DHDC

VII. Final Discussion Summary

David will work on drafting with a deadline of January 1st

VIII. Future topics

Internal discussion on our role, what is the best for the people of Durham?
How to approach the application for Augusta Certified Local Government Program sub-committee?

Motion to adjourn

Seconded

