Heritage/Historic Commission 2019

Annual Town Report

Established by a Town Meeting vote in 1987, the Historic District Commission became a combined Heritage/Historic District Commission in 1998 by a Town Council vote pursuant to state enabling legislation. As a body appointed by the Town whose powers and duties are governed by state statute, the Commission consists of seven members and up to five alternate members, all who are residents of the Town. The Commission oversees the preservation of historical and cultural resources, educates the public on matters of historical interest, and works with other boards, committees and commissions to assure responsible development that reflects the Town’s Master Plan.

As a Historic District Commission, the Commission governs five pieces of property that are in a zoning overlay district designated Historic District (by vote of a Town Meeting and subsequently by Town Council):

1. the Town Common (owned by the Town of Londonderry);
2. the Kent Allen Forest formerly known as the Town Wood Lot or Town Forest (owned by the Town of Londonderry and the parcel directly south and west of the Town Common);
3. the Morrison House Museum on Pillsbury Road (owned by the Londonderry Historical Society);
4. the Grange #44 facility (owned by the Grange #44); and
5. the Two Litchfield Road property (owned by CC Properties, LLC).

Changes within the Historic Districts must be approved by the Heritage/Historic District Commission according to the Town of Londonderry Zoning Ordinance, Section 4.6.2. Outside of the Historic District, the Commission also oversees the Town Pound (owned by the Town of Londonderry and restored in 1990) on Mammoth Road.

The Commission is also responsible for implementation of the recommendations from the Historic Properties Task Force Report (adopted by the Town Council in 2006) which includes periodically updating Londonderry’s List of Historic Structures and Properties (contained within the Report). The list serves to protect the designated properties by using a variety of tools, keeping any measures voluntary. The Commission acts as a valuable resource center for historic structures in Londonderry and restoration information.

The Commission’s goals include preserving historically significant properties, furthering the protection and restoration of stonewalls and other historic features, assisting the Londonderry Historical Society with improving the functionality of the Morrison House Museum and the potential community usage of the Grange #44 facility, and protecting tree lined vistas and local designation of scenic roads. Designated by the Town Council to be a Local Scenic Byway Advisory Committee, the Commission reaffirmed the Apple Way scenic and cultural byway designation (originally designated in 1996).

As part of the planning design review process, the Heritage/Historic District Commission reviews applications for new development, commenting on landscaping, viewscreens, lighting, signage and architectural design for all new multi-family, commercial and industrial developments. The Commission makes recommendations to the Planning Board regarding the preservation of historic buildings, stonewalls and other historic features. This year, the Commission reviewed 23 applications consisting of 12 site plans, three subdivision plans, three lot line adjustments, one conditional use permit and two condominium conversion plans as well as two applications for certificates of approvals for the Two Litchfield Road property (Map 12 Lot 68, Zoned C-III and Historic Overlay District (HOD)). The Commission held two separate public hearings relating to renovations and signage for this property resulting in a certificate of approval for an outdoor sign and creative art work to be displayed in the windows of the old barn on the property.
The Town of Londonderry is a Certified Local Government giving the Commission access to a variety of grants. Working with the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources, the Commission hopes to obtain a grant to assist in the preparation of an inventory of historical properties located in Town. The Commission welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission on other grant applications as they may arise.

The Commission collaborates with the Conservation Commission regarding maintenance and planning for the Kent Allen Forest. The Commission is thankful to Kent Allen for his assistance with revitalizing the town forest by improving existing and creating new walking trails, removing dead trees, and clearing invasive plants. The Commission wants to again extend gratitude to Jim Butler and Al Sypek for the maintenance of the Town Pound and their work in the Kent Allen Forest. The Commission would also like to acknowledge the donation and installation of 10 benches in the Kent Allen Forest, made possible by funding provided by American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). To increase safety in the forest, the Commission approved several tree cuttings along Pillsbury Road to ensure better sight distance for those entering and exiting the forest. The Commission also worked with Girl Scout Cadet Troop #1251 on its Silver Award project in the forest, which consisted of a storybook trail containing eight kiosks winding throughout the forest telling the story of the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace. Troop Leaders Gwen St. Germain and Sarah Fegan provided invaluable guidance and support to the Commission during its review.

The Commission also played an exciting role in the Nutfield 300th Year celebration. The year 2019 marked 300 years since the First Settlers arrived in the Nutfield Grant and established the community that eventually became the towns of Derry, Londonderry, Windham, and the Derryfield neighborhood of Manchester. Londonderry's longtime traditional Old Homes Day festivities received an added flair in 2019 to celebrate the Nutfield 300th along with the many activities that occurred starting with the Founders Weekend on April 12-14, 2019. Please be sure to take a peek at the Nutfield History website at https://www.nutfieldhistory.org/nutfield300th/ for more information.

This year, the Commission established its own set of rules and procedures, which will serve as a useful resource in guiding its members through the meeting process.

The Commission also wants to thank our town staff, Town Planner Colleen Mailloux, AICP, Associate Planner Laura Gandia, GIS Manager Amy Kizak and Administrative Support Coordinator Steve Cotton for their valued assistance and expertise. The Commission welcomes our new member Snehal Patel and our new chairperson Krystopher Kenney.

The Commission convenes every other month on the fourth Thursday (starting in January) at 7 pm in the Sunnycrest conference room in Town Hall, 268B Mammoth Road except in November, when it meets on the third Thursday. The Commission welcomes and encourages the public to attend these meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Krystopher Kenney, Chair

Arthur E. Rugg, Vice-Chair/Planning Board Member

David Colglazier, Secretary

Sue Joudrey, Commissioner

Tom Bianchi, Commissioner

Victoria Gorveatt, Commissioner

Jim Butler, Town Council Ex-Officio