

MINUTES OF THE MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON
CULTURE-ETHNICITY AND THE ARTS
July 5, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Matt Gerding, Chairman
 Councilor Nancie Cameron, Vice-Chairman
 Councilor Richard Michaud
 Celeste Feren
 Jenne Holmes

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
 City Clerk Kristen LaPanne

Councilor Gerding called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED CITY HISTORICAL MARKER PROGRAM

City Manager Belmore provided the Commission members with an updated handout pertaining to the proposed City historical markers which lists locations of the signs for consideration.

Councilor Gerding reviewed the list and questioned if the signs need to be placed in the City right of way, Manager Belmore responded that it is preferred. Councilor Gerding stated that the initial list was provided to the Historic District Commission and it was suggested that the City consider the Horne Cemetery for a historical marker. Jenne Holmes commented that she believes that the Horne Cemetery has been preserved because it is hidden. She added that the current list of markers will take some time as each sign has a lead time of 20-24 weeks.

Councilor Gerding stated that the list is an initial plan and may grow in the future and although he agrees with Ms. Holmes concerns of publicizing the Horne Cemetery, it is one of the most historical landmarks in the City of Somersworth.

Celeste Feren inquired about the Adopt a Spot program and if the Horne Cemetery would be a good candidate for the program. Councilor Gerding stated that there is an Adopt a Spot program and in the past, there has been a focus on the Cemetery during City Clean-up Days prior to COVID that could be brought back. Councilor Michaud commented that he would like to keep the location lowkey and do something respective for the site. Councilor Gerding suggested that if the City decides to consider a historical marker in the future for the Horne Cemetery, that perhaps the historical marker sign could be placed at the Lords Ct. entrance rather than High Street where it may draw more attention and increase the potential for vandalism.

Ms. Holmes stated that the City historical markers originated from the approval of two State historical markers. She added that Mayor Hilliard hoped for 10 markers for the City's 10 sq. miles. The City budgeted \$15,000 for the City historical markers and Ms. Holmes expects that it will not cost that much to cover the proposed list. Councilor Gerding pointed out that the current list recommends eight markers which leaves room to grow the list.

Ms. Holmes explained that she explored the Paul Wentworth House but the issue is that it sits on private property. Additionally, she looked into cheaper signs including cardboard and plastic signs, but recommends the plaques being proposed to ensure longevity.

The Commission agreed with the sign design and are happy with the look of them. Councilor Gerding also mentioned that the Historic District Commission approved of and supports the historical signs as presented.

The Commission unanimously agreed to move forward to a full Council vote to approve the City historical markers as proposed.

Manager Belmore asked if the Commission would prefer to meet after the vote by Council and if approved, to review the writing on each sign. The Commission agreed that they do not feel it is necessary to schedule a future meeting regarding the writing on the signs.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were no miscellaneous items discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Michaud made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 5-0 by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk