NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES
State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources 603-271-3483
19 Pillsbury Street, 2nd Floor, Concord NH 03301-3570
FAX 603-271-3433 *preservation@dcr.nh.gov* Voice/TDD RELAY ACCESS 1-800-735-2964

HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM
(HB 395 CHAPTER 285, LAWS OF 1999 RSA 227-C: 27 – RSA 227-C: 32)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Eighty-Fourth Meeting - July 19, 2011
1:00 P.M.
19 Pillsbury St., Concord, NH
(*An accessible public facility)*

Attendees

Carl Schmidt, NH State Historical Resources Council
Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director, NH Preservation Alliance
John Porter, Professor/Dairy, Emeritus, UNH Cooperative Extension
Elizabeth Muzzey, Director, DHR, State Historic Preservation Officer
Chet Riley, Friends of the Barn Committee
Steve Bedard, Friends of the Barn Committee
Ben Wilson, Bureau of Historic Sites, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
Beverly Thomas, Program Associate, NH Preservation Alliance
Deborah Gagne, Grants Coordinator, NH Division of Historical Resources

I. Welcome and Minutes of May 16th meeting

Carl reported that Tom Brady had informed him that he had retired as Dean of the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture as of June 30 and also that he would no longer be the State Conservation Committee's representative on the Barn Committee. Carl thanked Tom for his contributions, including his consistent efforts to keep us focused on the public purpose of the Committee's work. Carl asked Committee members to suggest possible replacements and said he would seek the advice of the Executive Director of the N.H. Association of Conservation Commissions.

There was one typo in the minutes. The revised minutes were approved following a motion by Chet Riley and seconded by Beth Muzzey.

II. Creating a Matching Barn Grant Program

A. Recent Work

The Committee reviewed and commented on the results of the June 30 meeting facilitated by Amy Lockwood of Full Circle Consulting regarding the proposal to create a matching grant program. Three documents produced by that meeting had been distributed to Committee members in advance: Meeting Notes, Spreadsheets detailing Decision Making, and Flow Charts outlining Fundraising and Grantmaking.

Carl said that a major objective of the June 30 meeting was to explore and clarify for the Preservation Alliance the prospective partners' roles and responsibilities, as well as possible program content and timelines, if the Preservation Alliance in due course decides to enter into a cooperative partnership with the Barn Committee to create a matching barn grant program. The participants were Jennifer Goodman, Beverly Thomas, Beth Muzzey, John Porter, Colin Cabot, Michael Bruss, Chris Rogers, and Carl, with Amy Lockwood facilitating the discussion. One of the most important results of the discussion, Carl said, was to clarify that the responsibility for decision-making in most all respects, including fundraising and grant making, should be assigned to the Preservation Alliance, but accompanied and supported by “collaborative” participation from all the participating partners. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Preservation Alliance would be the 501(c)(3) to which donors would make their contributions and would also be the organization that would actually be making the repair grants. Furthermore, this program structure would enhance and reinforce the desired “arms-length” status of the Barn Committee while still retaining its key role in the substance of the initiative.

Jennifer noted that discussion at the June 30 meeting also returned in an important way to the idea of a wider menu for the proposed fundraising campaign, which might include some funds to support NHPA barn assessment grants, barn workshops, and other barn-related work. This could have a number of advantages, such as broadening the fundraising appeal for certain donors. John Porter said this could well be the sustaining part of the proposed program that he has been seeking. Beth commented that it would help to answer the question of why money should go to help private owners of old barns. At the same time, it was noted, expanding the menu of funded activities would either mean reducing the amount to be devoted to barn grants (e.g., $10,000 each for 100 barns) or increasing the total fundraising target above $1 million. This led to a discussion of the possible budget for operating a barn grant program. Amy Lockwood had earlier estimated a total operating budget for a three-year, $1 million grant-making period at $109,500, which Jennifer commented would probably need to be enhanced if the menu were broadened. Chet Riley said it would be essential to carefully think through anticipated expenses. Also he said that we should not get hung up on the $1 million figure; in his experience, people like specific milestones, and we could, for example, establish a non-rounded fundraising goal of $1.2 million.

During the June 30 meeting, Jennifer said, the idea was raised of having a neutral party conduct a feasibility study regarding our contemplated fundraising goal. These are not normally done by the Preservation Alliance, but it is a subject that should be explored during the fundraising meeting on July 20 that will be facilitated by fundraising consultant Betsy McNamara. Steve Bedard reported that

a feasibility study for the new Gilmanton library building had produced a negative finding, but, despite that, a successful fundraising campaign was done, which showed that the feasibility study was flawed. Others noted that feasibility studies can help to highlight elements of proposed campaigns that need to be strengthened. Ben Wilson asked if we are going to give donors the ability to stretch out their contributions via pledges, such as over the contemplated five-year payout period. Steve said that the Gilmanton Library project had included a three-year pledge option for donors. This, it was agreed, would be another subject to be examined with Betsy McNamara on July 20.

Referring to the Flow Charts (which were based on outlines originally done by John), Chet asked about the meaning of "troubleshooting a barn project as necessary" in the Grant Making chart. And who will determine changes in the scope of work? In response to Beverly's request for clarification re the line that states that the Preservation Alliance (Program Coordinator) receives and evaluates applications, including site visits, Carl said his understanding was that the Program Coordinator would receive the applications and evaluate each one for completeness. Beyond that, as written in the Flow Chart at that point, the grant application process details remain to be determined. But it seems most likely to him that a new group (tentatively named the "Program Advisory Committee" by Amy Lockwood) -- and composed of one person from each of the four partners (NHPA, DHR, FNHB, Barn Committee) and possibly also technical volunteers who are not involved with the four partners -- would be responsible for evaluating and ranking the applications, and then making recommendations of grantee recipients to the Preservation Alliance for final approval. As to site visits, following discussion, there was consensus among the Committee members that the barns of finalists should be visited in advance of final decision-making.

B. Additional Review of Eligibility Criteria for a New Grant Program

-- Condition Assessments**.** Committee members returned to the subject of assessment grants. Chet suggested that it would be very important for potential grant recipients to have assessments completed prior to submitting their repair grant applications. Should they be a prerequisite or not, it was asked. Beverly Thomas said that the Preservation Alliance did 10-14 barn assessments last year. Beth observed that in some cases, such as a clear-cut need to replace or repair a roof, it would not seem necessary to require an assessment. Carl noted that condition assessments by the Vermont Preservation Trust are not a prerequisite of the Vermont state grant program, but in practice many applications are based on them.

-- Archeology. Beth suggested that DHR in-house archaeologists evaluate the grants with respect to potential effects to the land around the barns before construction begins. An archaeologist would review the awarded grants and not each application. It was agreed that Beth would invite DHR staff Historical Archeologist Edna Feighner to speak to the group about archaeology found in farmyards and the importance of archaeology in construction projects. It was also agreed that our "manual" for grant applicants would need revised wording regarding archeology.

-- Donors as Recipients. The question of whether or not donors to the grant fund would be eligible to apply for a grant was discussed again. It was agreed that there must be an appropriate way to resolve the tax, non-profit, and public relations aspects of this issue, and that, in the first instance, we should consult with "our own advisors", as Jennifer put it. In the Vermont state grant program, it was noted, grantees must declare their grants as income on their tax returns.

-- Public Benefit and Stewardship. Carl said that we still have considerable more work to do in terms of identifying and then reaching agreement on the stewardship requirements for the grant recipients, which might include easements and other commitments. Beverly has consulted with LCHIP staff regarding their practices and Carl is seeking clarification re the Vermont state program. It, for example, does not include a required easement but does mandate that if the property owner sells the barn within five years, the grant money must be returned to the state. The new Connecticut program might prove helpful as a model. In addition, Carl recommended that we review our draft eligibility provisions to make certain that they give sufficient emphasis to support for clearly identifiable public purposes, such as barns owned by community organizations and appropriate ngo's. And, it was suggested, it also must be clear that we are helping people to help themselves with the new program.

Carl said our new grant application review procedures should be based on a point-scoring system, in part to underscore to potential donors that this will clearly be a competitive process.

C. Next Steps.

These include the July 20 meeting on fundraising with Betsy McNamara of Full Circle Consulting. Amy Lockwood is contracted through August 31 and can be available to review various materials, including the draft Memorandum of Understanding. Betsy's work situation has changed so that she now would be able to work with the group on the fundraising phase, if the group wants to keep her on.

Carl appealed to all Committee members and Friends to be on the lookout for and then photograph captivating, iconic scenes of barns and farmsteads around the state for possible use in our new fundraising "case" and brochure. If at all possible, they should be emailed to Beverly in .jpg format, accompanied by basic identifying information. She has agreed to assemble a library of such images for our use. Also, we will appreciate receiving copies of examples of particularly effective fundraising brochures – on any subject.

III. Planning to Support Renewals of RSA 79-D Easements

Beverly and Carl met with attorney Carolyn Baldwin on July 14 regarding plans for the renewal of RSA 79-D easements, which will begin to expire in 2013. They agreed to propose to the Barn Committee that its goal be the renewal of all existing discretionary easements, plus -- as a result of the attendant publicity -- the creation of new, additional easements on other eligible historic agricultural structures throughout the state.

They will meet again on September 22 and plan that by the fall of 2012 explanatory notices will be sent to all municipal governments and also to the individual holders of the easements. A renewal application form will be created and Carolyn Baldwin is looking at this issue now. Publicity will be very important and should be done through the Market Bulletin, NHPA, etc. In the near term, we will need to meet, coordinate, and seek agreement on this plan with appropriate Department of Revenue Administration staff, and also work with the Local Government Center and the state assessors organization to bring them up to date. Chet Riley's easement, which may well have been the first in the state, is being used as an example. Chet said he believes that most of the current property owners with the easement will want to renew. Language in the renewal should include a provision that makes clear to assessors and town governments that a new, individual reassessment of the barn before renewal (in contrast to regularly scheduled town-wide revaluations) would be considered by DRA as a "spot assessment" and thus not be permissible. Beverly recommended that new applicants should also be given this information.

IV. Education & Outreach Task Force

Proposal for Summer Task Force Visit.

It was agreed that the Task Force would visit the Daniel Webster Birthplace in Franklin on Tuesday, August 23, with a specific focus on its barn and what might be done with and for it. Ben Wilson, whose Bureau of Historic Sites within DRED is responsible for the overall property, explained that it is most endangered of all New Hampshire's state-owned Historic Sites. It includes the "Sawyer House", which dates from 1790 and was updated in 1850 shortly before Webster's death in 1852, and a two-room 1913 reproduction of the cottage that was his birthplace. The dairy barn at the back of Sawyer House needs a lot of work. It was at one time being converted to a summer theatre. There is no "friends group" for the site but Leigh Webb and the Franklin Historical Society are in some ways its equivalent. Jack Tobey is the volunteer site interpreter who has it open on Saturdays. Ben would like to see the site turned into an educational organic farm. It consists of 175 acres and 50 acres could cleared for use as the "organic garden". A farmer would be able to lease the space to farm it and run the educational center. Ben would like to have the Barn Committee look at how to bring the barn back to use as a barn. A stick-built gambrel, it may date to 1913 when the cottage was moved to its current location. The site is located off of Route 127 south of Franklin.

In addition to Leigh Webb, Carl suggested that local officials and media from Franklin be notified of the visit and invited to attend. John Porter will send out a separate message with details.

V. Promotional Events

A. Review N.H. Preservation Alliance Workshops

Enthusiastic praise in all respects was expressed for the Barn Preservation Workshop conducted by Ian Blackman at Rockledge Farm in New Hampton on Saturday, June 18.

Beverly provided the following list of upcoming events.

Caring for Your Historic Summer Camp, Cottage or Farm will be presented on Wednesday, July 20, from 7 – 9 pm at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in Holderness, co-sponsored by the Squam Lakes Conservation Society.

Preserving Community Character: Win-win Strategies for Managing Change in the Lakes Region will be presented on Tuesday, August 16, from 7 – 9 pm at the Moultonborough Public Library, co-sponsored by the Moultonborough Heritage Commission.

2011 Summer Tour: Bretton Woods and Crawford Notch will be presented on Friday, August 19, 10 am to 4 pm, co-sponsored with WhiteMountainsHistory.org, Omni Mt Washington Hotel, Twin Mountain-Bretton Woods Historical Society and Twin Mountain-Bretton Woods Chamber of Commerce.

Barn Preservation Workshop will be presented on Saturday, October 1st, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, Rockledge Farm, New Hampton

See www.nhpreservation.org for additional information.

B. Farm & Forest EXPO, February 3-4, 2012

In coordination with Jennifer and John, Beverly presented the following four options for the Barn Committee's Educational Session topic

-- How to Assess the Condition of Your Old Barn
-- Simple Solutions to Prepare Your Old Barn for Survival
-- How to Read Your Barn
-- Assistance Available for NH Barn Owners

The Committee's consensus was **How to Read Your Barn.** Beverly agreed to ask Arron Sturgis if he would be willing to lead the presentation. She was also requested to prepare a title and topic description to be submitted in the near future to the Farm & Forest organizers to ensure that we receive good and effective publicity in the F&F schedule and other publications. Deb Gagne will talk to Tori Berube about putting this topic on the Expo agenda.

VI. Next Meeting Date of the Barn Committee: TENTATIVE – TO BE CONFIRMED: Monday, September 12th at 1:00 at the DHR.