



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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**HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES MATCHING GRANTS
PROGRAM**

**(HB 395 □ CHAPTER 285, LAWS OF 1999 □ RSA 227-C: 27 – RSA 227-C: 32)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

AGENDA

Eighty-Ninth Meeting – Monday June 3, 2013

1:00 p.m.

19 Pillsbury St., Concord, NH

(An accessible public facility)

Carl Schmidt, NH State Historic Resources Council
Elizabeth Muzzey, Director & SHPO, NH Division of Historical Resources
John Porter, Professor Emeritus, UNH Cooperative Extension
Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director, NH Preservation Alliance
Ben Wilson, Bureau of Historic Sites, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
Beverly Thomas, Program Associate, NH Preservation Alliance
Robert Johnson, II, Policy Director, NH Farm Bureau Federation
Jennifer Gornnert, Regulatory Services, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food
Deborah Gagne, Grants Coordinator, NH Division of Historical Resources

I. Announcements and Minutes of January 9 meeting

Carl welcomed everyone to the 89th meeting of the Barn Committee. There were no announcements. Following a motion by Beverly, seconded by Beth, the minutes from the January 9th meeting were approved without changes or additions.

II. Report re N.H. Preservation Alliance Barn Task Force

Jennifer summarized the recent work of the Barn Task Force, which included members of the Barn Committee and the Preservation Alliance Board. The focus was about quantifying interviews, assessment grants and new assessment grants. What came from that was that more staff and more assessment grants were most important. Jennifer provided copies of the action plan. It was determined that the committee should continue to meet and discuss funding options for barns. Money continues to be what is needed to make this all possible. In early July the Alliance will know where the board stands with the money issue/big priorities since this will be an agenda item on their next board meeting.

Jennifer will be talking to the grant funder “prospect” that came out of the study last year that had committed to \$50,000 for barn assessment grants. Jennifer has worked with Betsey (person hired for feasibility study) to get ideas on what questions to ask. The prospective funder offered their financial assistance to better understand the needs of barns statewide and was not interested in an endowment. Jennifer will get a sense of what this donor is asking in her conversation with the person. Beverly will send out a short survey to people who have had barn condition assessments in the past, asking what they have done to their barn, etc., since receiving the assessments. John would like to have a person identified in every town in New Hampshire who knows the number of barns in their town, a sort of a “barn keeper”. He believes that these people exist, but need to be designated, and therefore could be helpful to this program. John estimates that there are 22,000 barns in the state of New Hampshire.

III. Renewal of Expiring Tax Incentive (RSA 79-D) Easements: A Continuing Saga

Carl updated the Committee on efforts over the past several months to clarify with the Property Appraisal Division of NH DRA the implications of renewal of RSA 79-D preservation easements. In particular, the issue concerns the ten-year easements on 58 structures in 26 towns that expired on March 31 of this year. With the assistance of JLCAR Vice Chairman Rep. Peter Schmidt, Carolyn Baldwin, Beverly and Carl were able to meet with DRA staff on January 28 to review amendments to Administrative Rules pertaining to RSA 79-D which DRA had drafted. However, since that time, DRA has not been responsive to further communications from Carl in this regard. In February, letters signed by Jennifer were sent to the property owners of the 58 structures and to their respective town governments noting that the easements would soon expire and explaining the implications of renewal of the easements. (The letter in draft form had been sent in advance to DRA for comment.) Since then, Beverly said, she had received thank-you emails from a number of barn owners whose barns were up for renewal.

On May 28, on behalf of the Barn Committee, Carl emailed DRA requesting an opportunity to discuss the Committee’s interest and role in the amendment of Administrative Rules applying to RSA 79-D easement renewal. In the absence of a reply, and on the advice of a JLCAR staff member, Carl then contacted a NH DRA staff member whose responsibilities include Administrative Rules for the Department. He was told that the process to update, amend and renew DRA’s Administrative Rules, which will expire in their entirety on December 1, 2013, will not get under way until a Department-wide process begins in July. Therefore, he was assured that it will be possible for the Barn Committee to provide DRA with recommendations at an early stage as to the content of DRA’s initial rule-making proposal, provided they are received by early July. As a next step, therefore, Carl will work with Beverly, Jennifer, Beth, and Carolyn Baldwin to prepare a formal request and then circulate it to other members of the Barn Committee for comment before sending it to DRA. [Note: The Barn Committee’s memorandum was sent to DRA on July 5.]

IV. Discussion of the Future of the N.H. Barn Committee, including goals and responsibilities, membership, and frequency of meetings

Committee members discussed the basic question: Should the Barn Committee continue to exist and, if so, what should its goals be? Carl noted that the Committee's basis in law is RSA 227-C: 27-32, which was enacted in 1999 as the first attempt (HB 395) to create a state-funded matching repair grant program, and specifically in RSA 227-C: 29, which designates the membership of an "Advisory Committee". Although the law was enacted without any grant funds, it was decided to convene the new committee in October 1999 to consider what further action might be taken to promote barn preservation. NH DHR Director Nancy Dutton was the initial chair of the Committee.

Beth read from a memorandum outlining the Barn Committee's accomplishments that she wrote in 2010 for the Legislature's Committee on Committees when it evaluated state committees as to whether they were still relevant. Barn Committee members then expressed their opinions, which supported continuation of the Barn Committee. Jennifer Gornnert indicated her Department has a principal interest in the Committee's work; Rob pointed to the unique interactions and resulting valuable partnerships with other organizations and groups that result from Barn Committee membership; and Ben endorsed the past practice of setting annual goals for the Committee. The role the Committee can continue to play with the Legislature also was noted.

Meeting Schedule. As to the frequency of meetings, Jennifer suggested quarterly meetings rather than trying to meet monthly or bi-monthly. Carl said that during the 1999-2003, the Committee met almost monthly, working on further efforts to secure state funds for barn grants, support for NHPA assessment grants, the barn handbook and other promotional efforts, RSA 79-D, and federally funded repair grants. Later on, during the 2004 – 2012 period, the Committee met on an average of four times per year.

In conclusion, members agreed that in the future the Committee will meet quarterly, in September, January, March and June, with an Education & Outreach Task Force visit to a barn during the summer. In general, meetings will be held on Monday or Tuesday at 1 p.m. at DHR. A draft Work Plan or Goals for the coming year should be presented for review and approval at the September meeting.

Jennifer offered to prepare a draft for the upcoming meeting.

Membership and Other Committee Matters. The two Active Agriculturalist seats are hard to fill; suggestions are welcomed. The Conservation Commission position also remains open. Beth intends to talk with Van about a barn contractor being his designee. Carl has agreed to continue to serve as Chair for the time being. It was pointed out that biennial reports to the Governor and Legislature need to be caught up, possibly by working with the Preservation Alliance to create them.

V. Education & Outreach Task Force: Proposals for Summer Visit

John Porter has suggested a study visit to a large, 1930s era barn at the Coos County Farm in West Stewartstown that is threatened with demolition. If we go there, we need creative answers on why they should appreciate the resource and preserve it, and, in particular, possible future uses of the structure. County Commissioner Rick Sampson is supporting the effort to preserve the barn. Jennifer suggested a brief visit to the nearby Poore Family Farm. Tuesday July

16th was chosen for the visit and Monday the 15th as the backup. Beth suggested that Ruby & Robert Wallace should be invited to give the perspective from people who have saved their barn in the North Country.

John Porter is looking for suggestions for a publisher to produce a new edition of "Preserving Old Barns", which will soon be out of print. Suggestions will be welcomed.

John Porter is looking for suggestions for a publisher to update Preserving Old Barns.

VI. Upcoming Events

A. National Barn Alliance Annual Meeting, June 7-8, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

B. N.H. Preservation Alliance Barn Tour in Frankestown, July 27

Beverly is hoping that six barns will be open for tours. John will do his talk entitled, "The History of Agriculture as Told by Barns". Frank Hanchet from Frankestown will add to the talk with pictures and information on Frankestown barns.

Beverly is working on a stone barn foundation workshop in Rye at the Goss Barn on August 17th.

VII. Other Business

Next meeting: Monday, September 16, at 1 p.m. at the office of the NH Division of Historical Resources.