



# Milford Heritage Commission

Town Hall

1 Union Square

Milford NH 03055

## Minutes March 2024

Meeting Date: March 13, 2024, 7:00pm, conducted in the Town Hall Banquet Room

### Participating:

David Palance, Chairman	Paul Dargie, BoS Representative
Chris Thompson, Vice Chair	Judy Hohenadel, Nominee
Sarah Brown, Treasurer	Michael Thornton, Cemetery Trustee
Paul Liamos, Secretary	Jeff Wells, Citizen

### Review of Minutes:

The February meeting did not meet quorum, January minutes were reviewed and voted into record as submitted.

### New Business

**Nomination Interview** – After introductions, Judy presented a short biography and offered her services as a nominee for the Heritage Commission, she has been active with the Commission for the past month editing and proofing documents. There was a vote to submit a letter to the Board of Selectmen of our choice which was voted and overwhelmingly approved. Dave P. to submit the letter with a short bio.

**Hitchiner conceptual plans, Old Wilton Rd.**– Chris T. presented the expansion plans as provided in full-sized sheets by Planning and Development prior to the meeting. After a short discussion, the Commission found no concerns.

*No heritage impact*

**210 Elm St. Bifsha Condos** – Dave P. presented the plans for a set of connected condo type buildings to the rear of the existing house. Demolition would be required for the two garage/storage buildings otherwise the ca 1900 house would remain. After a short discussion, the Commission found no concerns.

*No heritage impact*

**Rashid Gas Station/ Cutts Family Homestead**– Dave P. presented the plans for a new building comprising a convenience store and gas station. Although the plans were tasteful and not interfering with any heritage issues, the property itself is important to Milford Heritage due to the Cutts Family and their rich dedication and service to the country and the town. Dave presented a six-page biography of the family that included known descendants still residing and at least 3 service members including Submarine Commander Elwin F. Cutts who was raised on this property. The buildings comprising the farm were on both sides of South St and have since been demolished. Nothing remains as a reminder to this family. The Commission suggested that we share the biography with the Planning Board and the owners with a request for some remembrance to be included in the new building plans.

### *Heritage impact*

**Master Plan Committee.** – Camille Pattison submitted a call for volunteer as shared by Dave P. Camille is the new Planning and Development Director. She will be kicking off a set of sessions to update the Town Master Plan and asked for 1-2 members of the Heritage Commission to sit on this new board. The first meeting will be Tuesday, 2Apr2024 @ 4:00pm in the Board of Selectmen’s meeting room. Dave directed members to contact Camille directly.

**Conceptual Plan for Riverside Columbarium.** – Board of Cemetery Trustees Chairman, Mike Thornton presented the concept of providing future burials at the town’s largest cemetery. A columbarium is a structure or building with multiple niche or compartments for holding urns. A new construction of a columbarium to house cremations as a plan is proposed to provide additional space for cremations in Riverside cemetery. Existing lots are available for sale now for both full internments and cremains, however looking out 10 years, the town may need more burial space. The proposal creates a capacity of nearly 2,000 sets of cremains, thus a final resting place for ashes up to 64x the of a standard, in-ground burial. On 27Mar2024, the Cemetery Trustees will be meeting to discuss design, proposal, and plan to move forward with BoS approval.

**Dam Removal Feasibility Study.** – A presentation at a recent BoS meeting the concept of receiving State funds to assess the feasibility of removing the dams in town along the Souhegan River. Dave P. described the past efforts done in 2014 which resulted in a report that was rejected as it did not address historical, heritage and safety issues. Since none of these issues have been resolved, it is Dave’s opinion that this venture would tie up important paid and volunteer resources with no promise of different results. Dave agreed to share the efforts done in the past with the Commission for their awareness.

**Oval and Library Parking proposal.** – Paul Dargie shared an update on issues relating to property donation at the library requires a garden to be perpetually maintained on the property from the donor, Mrs. Mary Lull. Additional parking is part of the latest plan for the library property for up to 30+ more spaces. The plans show a loss of 15 spaces on Oval.

**Lorden conceptual plans, Ponemah Rd.** – Dave P. presented the conceptual plans as provided by Planning and Development. The plan is to construct seven pairs of residential attached duplex

homes on the lot of 19 Ponemah Rd. The existing house will be divided off on to a one-acre lot. After a short discussion, the Commission found no concerns.

*No heritage impact*

**Shiela White Subdivision** – Dave P. presented the conceptual plans as provided by Planning and Development to create a two-lot subdivision from an existing residential 9.8 acre lot on 33 Ruonala Rd. After a short discussion, the Commission found no concerns.

*No heritage impact*

### Old Business

**Snowmobile Connection and improvements to Foster Rd.** – Paul Dargie and Jeff Wells presented a follow-up discussion from last meeting. The Commission agreed to share our research of the area on Foster Rd.

**Financial report** – Sarah presented Policy for submitting Invoices previous comments were incorporated. The procedure was voted and approved as written. Dave P. to share this with BoS and Planning to include on the record.

**Laurel Schoolhouse project** – Katherine could not make the meeting, but Dave P. shared that the money for the roof was approved and that DPW will be starting the replacement this spring.

**Bandstand renovation project** – Katherine could not make the meeting, but Dave P. shared that the budget was approved therefore the money to complete the bandstand project is now nearly fully funded. A Statement of Work (SOW) is being drafted and then be posted for bid.

**Date of Next Meeting:** April 10th @ 7:00pm on zoom and the Banquet Room, Town Hall

**Call to Adjourn:** 8:41 PM

Ref:

Heritage Commission and Historical Society comments on the past Dam Feasibility Report dated September 2014.

## **Dam Removal Feasibility-Study 2014**

### **ES-1 Background**

" The dams serve no specific purpose."

This opening remark or statement is a gross misrepresentation of the primary purpose of the Goldman Dam as it now exists;

The Town of Milford at its 1966 Town Meeting held a discussion concerning the unsightly condition of the river behind and at the Goldman Dam. The Town instructed the Moderator of that meeting to appoint a committee to see what could be done about the situation and to report

back their findings at a recessed meeting. On June 14 1966 the recessed town meeting was in session to hear the committee 's report. At that meeting the Town voted with the concurrence of the State Water Resources Board and Mr Sam Goldman to repair the dam for the esthetics purposes it would provide. The sum of \$20,000 was authorized to be bonded by the Town for this project of civic improvement. That sum in today's dollars would amount to \$150,000.

Following the Dams restoration Emerson Park was developed. It is one of the premier parks in Milford with reflective views of the impounded riverscape, stone walls, flower beds, green lawns and pathways along the river. This park has become a focal point for countless weddings, and public gatherings. It's charm is derived chiefly from the magnificent reflective views of the impounded riverscape with the bridge, buildings and overhanging trees all adding to the ambience of the place.

The Goldman Dam continues to serve its intended purpose to enhance the Historic Downtown Area of Milford.

Neither of these dams create a flood storage capacity problem according to the report. Flooding at the Boy and Girls Club that is suggested will continue with or without the dams as this structure was built within the normal flood plain of this river.

## **Ownership, Liability and Safety**

Should the dams be removed to reveal the "natural condition" of this shallow stoney river we will find huge rock outcroppings now hidden or contained within the dam itself and the impoundment area. During high water there will be rapids formed and a very short stretch of dangerous river. During normal to low flow these rocks and falls will continue to present a dangerous stretch of river that will remain a threat to public safety due to encouraged recreational use of this stretch of river. The current dams have existed for generations without undue liability being created.

## **Rt 13 Bridge abutments.**

The report does not address the issue of freezing and thawing of ice at the juncture of the bridge abutments and the base rock upon which it rests. This bridge is built of laid up stone blocks resting on granite or ledge base. Since this Historic Structure was built the base has always remained frost free below the impounded water level. Should the water be allowed to raise and fall on its own freezing and thawing at the base will occur with repeated freeze expansion in cracks and crevices resulting in rapid deterioration and integrity of the structure. The report only addresses water scouring by movement of the water not the aforementioned freezing issue.

## **Ice dams from sheet ice.**

The report does not address the damming probability that will occur if the dam is removed. From 50 years of observation of this area ice sheets form all up and down the river during cold spells in the winter. Flooding rains and high water float them and start them down the river when they arrive at the impounded water behind the dam they float along and are swept over the dam by the high water. Without the dam they will hang upon the rocky bottom and bridge abutment. The resulting ice dam will be catastrophic to the bridge and the community. We have witnessed this sort of bottom hang up of the ice several years ago when the stretch of river near the drive in theater flooded because of a shallow ford in the river bed. The huge rocks and boulders at the dam site will cause similar mischief but in a more critical location. The dams provide the hydraulic lift needed to move the ice downstream.

## **Water and O2 quality at the impounded sites.**

The report makes no mention of the effects that the dams create by oxygenating the river water as it passes over the dams. Is it more or less than the impounding does on this tiny stretch of river run and low impact dams? The report talks of dams in general

not these specific dams.

## **Fisheries**

The two dams at Lowell and Lawrence Ma are the major impediment to migrating fish and until they are removed or proper fish ladders created at those locations we will not see the return of migrating fish described in the report. The Milford dams can easily support inexpensive fish ladders if we ever see migration above the Massachusetts dams. Wildcat Falls in Merrimack present a far more formidable natural barrier than do with of the Milford Dams. The report indicates tributaries of the Souhegan as spawning grounds. Does this mean Railroad Pond, Osgood Pond and Hartshorn Pond must also eventually come under attack by this group?

## **Sediment Risk**

The report indicates an unacceptable level of contaminants in the impounded sediment behind the Goldman Dam created by the adjoining superfund site at Fletcher Paint Works. Yet the report would suggest that it is cost effective to let this contamination move down stream upon the dams removal. Cost effective to who? The Responsible Party? How in good conscience can we just flush this BIO Hazardous material down stream to Amherst and Merrimack and beyond? The removal of this material should be incorporated in the Super Fund Clean Up scheduled for next year regardless of the outcome of the dam removal or not at some future time.

## **Historic Structure**

Both of these dams cores and location are of Historic Significance. They represent a period in American History when we were moving from a Wilderness Frontier to a settled urban area. The water power associated with these two dams powered both primitive and eventually highly mechanized mill systems. They represent 200 plus years of progress in the settlement of at first West Dunstable Massachusetts and latter what became know as "Millford in the Province of New Hampshire". The current surface of these structures has been renewed much as we would resurface a building or roadway to keep it in repair and serviceable condition. The fact remains however that the core of these two structures does meet Historical Structure Criteria.