

**CHENEY BROTHERS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2021  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM  
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Lynne Ferrigno, Co-Chair; Bettye Kramer, Co-Chair; Tom Ferguson, Mary Dunne, Mary Ann Handley, Starr McLean, Geoffrey Naab, Susan Barlow, Amanda DeLaura, and Jack Prior, Ex-Officio

Members Absent: William Farley, Rita McParland and Leslie Frey

Also Present: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic Development; AnneMarie Boyle, Senior Account Associate

I. Adoption of the Minutes of December 17, 2020

Ms. Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm and asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. Ferguson moved to adopt the minutes. Ms. Handley seconded. Ms. Kramer requested several corrections to the minutes. Ms. Ferrigno asked for a vote and all members voted to adopt the minutes as amended.

II. Old Business

1. Discussion: Commission Purview and Authority

Ms. Ferrigno said Ms. Dunne, who works with the State Historic Preservation Office, had graciously agreed to speak about local historic district commissions; and how the Cheney Commission differs from other groups in the state with historic preservation purview. Ms. Dunne said the Cheney Commission is unique and that, until a couple years ago, it was the only commission of its type in Connecticut. She said some municipalities have established special commissions through recent enabling legislation, with varying degrees of authority.

She said the commissions with the most regulatory authority are set up under enabling statute 7-147a. This legislation has been around since 1961 and there are 86 commissions, over 100 districts, in the state that are covered by the statute. She said that is the way most historic district commissions operate in CT and if the Cheney Commission is seeking more legal strength, the Town could look into the legislation. Mr. Ferguson said that he would like to take small steps towards having more authority. He said it would be beneficial to be able to be present at Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) meetings in order to explain the Cheney Commission's reasoning for its decisions.

Mr. Anderson said the PZC discusses different types of applications, including business items, for which there are not public hearings. Most items relating to development in the Historic Zone fall into this category. He said for business items, the PZC hears a staff report and if there is a recommendation from the Cheney Commission, staff presents the

recommendation in the report. He said he believes the PZC may be open to getting a report directly from the Cheney Commission. He noted that, with a staff report, it is not a back and forth discussion, but an opportunity for the Commission to hear from experts prior to making a decision. Mr. Anderson said there are certain items that always require a hearing and some that are considered business items and do not require a public hearing. Mr. Anderson suggested someone from the Cheney Commission speak to the PZC Chair, if they wanted to pursue the idea of participating in the staff report. Ms. Kramer said she would be willing to speak with the Chair of the PZC.

With regard to the historic district pamphlet discussed at the previous meeting, Ms. Dunne said she believed the Commission could get a grant to hire someone to have the guidelines updated. Ms. DeLaura offered to do the graphic designing of a new pamphlet to be printed, once they have all the necessary content. Ms. Ferrigno suggested that they put together a sub-committee for anyone interested in helping with this project.

### III. New Business

#### 1. Discussion: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Mr. Anderson said that the PZC had voted to allow permitting of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in all areas of town, with the exception of the Historic zone. Mr. Anderson said he wanted to bring this item up to the Cheney Commission so they could decide if they wanted to schedule a discussion about this or wait until an application came up within the historic district. In response to a question from Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Anderson said it was a broad request brought to the PZC to allow charging stations across town through a change in the current zoning regulations. Mr. Ferguson said he felt it would be smart to consider the charging stations on a case by case basis. Mr. Prior said perhaps the Commission could look at other historic districts to see how they have handled this. In response to a question from Ms. Ferrigno, Mr. Anderson said it would be property owners who submit the applications. He said the charging stations could be allowed as a special exception in the zoning regulations in which case the Commission could review them case by case.

Mr. Anderson said he could put together a packet of materials about charging stations to send to the Commission. In response to a comment from Ms. Kramer, Mr. Anderson said that if Electric Vehicle Charging Stations were to be allowed in the Historic zone, the process would be the same as for other detailed plan applications. A site plan would need to be submitted, showing exactly where the charging stations would be installed, and that submission would be reviewed by the Commission. Mr. Anderson said this topic can be added to a future agenda for further discussion.

#### IV. Communications

Mr. Anderson gave an update on the house at 25 Edwards St. He said that SHPO had gone to the PZC asking if they would be open to a change in the approved plan which would save the house from demolition. The PZC said they were open to such an application, though there are some engineering challenges that the owner would face. SHPO and the current property owner are working together to try to come to a resolution.

#### V. Committee Reports

##### 1. Discussion: Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. McLean said that due to the pandemic, last year's awards were cancelled. He said he thinks the Commission should go forward this year, and that hopefully the awards event can be held in person. If it could not be held in person that they could possibly hold it via Zoom. He said he'd like to get information in the newspaper to get the information out to the community. Ms. Handley suggested holding the awards outdoors. Mr. McLean said that was a great idea and that perhaps they could also livestream it from the outdoor location for those that are unable to attend in person. In response to a question from Ms. Kramer, Mr. McLean said that there are nominations left over from the previous year. He said the subcommittee will refresh those and include them in this year's nominations.

Ms. Ferrigno explained that the Manchester Historic Preservation Awards has been a project of the Cheney Commission for at least fifteen years. She said the awards started as a way to recognize property owners in the Cheney District who restored and repaired their properties in a way that preserved the integrity of the building and/or landscape. She said it has since expanded to include historic properties throughout Manchester. She said the Commission works with the guideline that improvements should have been made within the last five years. Ms. Ferrigno said the criteria for a nominee is that the structure be at least 50 years old and cannot have vinyl or aluminum siding. Nominations can come from the Cheney Commission and from the public as well. In response to a question from Ms. DeLaura, Ms. Ferrigno said the Commission does not have a budget, per se, for the awards event. She said the Planning Dept. has graciously picked up the cost of the award plaques and the small reception they host when the awards are presented. Mr. McLean offered to take pictures for this year's awards. Ms. DeLaura said her husband's brewery would love to help sponsor this, if it were appropriate to do so.

Ms. Ferrigno said that there is a nomination application, and while every line doesn't need to be completed, any information that can be shared is helpful. Mr. McLean said there is a space on the application for adding a description as to why someone is being nominated. He said sometimes hearing the backstory of a property is very helpful. This is something nice the Commission does for the community in acknowledging the property owners' hard work.

VI. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Ferguson moved to adjourn, Ms. Handley seconded and all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.