

**Town of Fitzwilliam
Historic District Commission
Minutes
March 4, 2025**

Members Present: John Fitzwilliam, Chairman; Bill Davis; Ken Beckwith; Ron Heroux; and Tom Rothermel, Selectman's Representative.

Members Absent: Isaac Morse.

Staff Present: Lori Nolan, Land Use Coordinator.

Others Present: Karen Beitler

Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Discussion of the proposed warrant article at this year's Town Meeting:

Article 31 (petition): Accept donation of 20x12 foot wood gazebo: to see if the town will vote to accept a 20 x 12 foot wood gazebo donated by Sam Norway of Tri-State Restoration. This is to be placed on the Town Common. Majority vote required.

The Commission reviewed the visual example of the proposed gazebo.

Mr. Heroux did not feel the size was large enough to accommodate the musical groups. He suggested that the Eliot Institute and Common Committee be involved in discussions.

Mr. Davis felt this was a permanent structure, while the tent is only up for four months. He felt the mission of the HDC is to maintain the historic colonial character. He appreciated the offer, but felt that the gazebo would be better located at the pole barn/tennis courts. He felt this structure has no colonial character and not appropriate for the Common.

Mr. Fitzwilliam commented that when people think of a gazebo, they think of a cute Victorian white structure. He was not in favor of this proposal. He was in agreement with the previous gazebo as it had the proper look and feel. Mr. Fitzwilliam could not argue on the function, but did not agree with the style.

Mr. Beckwith was not in favor of the design, including there being no base, having an aluminum frame, and a plastic roof.

Mr. Rothermel commented that the donors proposed the Common as the location as the pole barn/tennis court area already has covered seating. Mr. Rothermel was not in favor of the tent and felt this design was an improvement. He commented that the Block was given after-the-fact permission to use asphalt shingles, which are not a historical product.

Ms. Beitler commented that it would be great to have a permanent covered area on the Common. She can envision displaying a Historical Society sleigh during the winter months.

Mr. Fitzwilliam motioned that the Historic District Commission is opposed to the petition Article 31 to accept donation of a 20x12 foot gazebo to be placed on the Common. Mr. Beckwith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Beckwith; Heroux]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

The Commission requested that the Eliot Institute look at a different color for the tent covering.

Article 32 (petition): Shall the Town vote to (1) accept the title to the Amos J. Blake House Fitzwilliam Museum by deed from the Fitzwilliam Historical Society and (2) to accept the transfer of a percentage of the assets of the Fitzwilliam Historical Society to be placed in a town administered Trust-Fund which shall be used for the purpose of maintaining, improving, and expanding public access to the Amos H. Blake House Fitzwilliam Museum. Majority vote required.

The Commission discussed this proposal. It will have no exterior changes. Karen Beitler, Historical Society member, explained that all structural items have been replaced. In the future, there is a need

for gutters. They have received a proposal for aluminum gutters, but are still deciding on style (case vs half round style).

Mr. Heroux read a statement giving a brief history of the Blake House.

Mr. Fitzwilliam commented that it would not be a stretch for this building to become part of the Town's portfolio. He explained that there was extensive work done in the basement and an addition built in the last 20 years. It is a structurally sound building.

Mr. Rothermel felt that a building inspection should have been done so that the Town knows what they are getting. Ms. Beitler stated that the buyer typically conducts an inspection. But this transfer is a matter of trust. The Historical Society is prepared to transfer \$25,000 to the Town, which is estimated to take care of all expenses for at least the next 2-3 years. After three years, the Historical Society is prepared to walk away if no changes occur. This proposal will transfer the title of the building to the Town; the collection will remain with the Historical Society. The Historical Society will continue to write grants, and they will retain some funds to allow for grant matching.

Mr. Davis supports this warrant article as the Historical Society needs town help. Without it, they cannot continue their work.

Mr. Fitzwilliam motioned that the Historic District Commission is supportive of the petition Article 32 to accept title to the Blake House. Mr. Beckwith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Beckwith; Heroux]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

With no other business to discuss, **Mr. Beckwith motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fitzwilliam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Beckwith; Heroux]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Nolan
Land Use Coordinator

Minutes approved as written on April 10, 2025.