

**Town of Litchfield, NH
Heritage Commission Meeting
Fire Station - Community Room
July 16, 2026**

Date Approved: 09 / 17 / 2026

In Attendance:

Members Marion Colby, Chair; Steven Calawa; and Dianne Plansky (Selectmen's Representative)

Also in

Attendance: John Croes

Absent: Karl Franck, Vice-Chair; Gail Barringer; and Cory Flindt (alternate) were excused

A. Call to Order:

- a. 6:00 p.m. – Chair Marion Colby called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
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B. Rollcall

- a. Marion Colby, Chair
b. Steven Calawa, Member
c. Dianne Plansky, Selectmen's Representative
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C. Approve Minutes from the June 18, 2026, Meeting:

Motion: (D. Plansky/ S. Calawa) Motion to approve the June 18, 2026, meeting minutes.

Discussion: None

Vote: (3-0-0) The motion carried.

D. Request for Additional Items / Other Business:

Chair Colby added one item to the agenda: a letter from the owners of Noel's Tree Farm addressed to the Heritage Commission.

E. Public Input at 6:03 p.m.:

- a. No one came forward.

Closed at 6:04 p.m.

Ms. Colby invited residents to attend Heritage Commission meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

F. Old Business:

a. 250th Celebration Update:

The Commission reviewed preparations for Litchfield's 250th Celebration, scheduled for July 25–26, 2026.

The Celebration will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Old Town Center, then transition to Roy Memorial Park at Darrah Pond in the afternoon for family activities. Although no representative from the 250th Celebration Committee was present due to a meeting at the park, the Commission noted that planning continues to advance.

b. Powwow Update:

The Commission received an update on preparations for the annual Powwow, scheduled for the first weekend of August.

Ms. Colby reported that planning is proceeding as scheduled under the leadership of the New England Intertribal Council. The Council continues to advertise the event through multiple outlets, including Facebook and the State of New Hampshire events calendar. Additional local promotional efforts are underway, including a live presentation before the event.

c. Passaconaway Marker Update:

The Commission discussed the proposed location for the Passaconaway historic marker.

Ms. Colby reported that the previously approved property owner withdrew permission to install the marker. Ms. Plansky identified a second potential location and is awaiting a meeting with the new property owner to discuss the proposal.

Once a location is finalized, the Commission will submit its application to the State of New Hampshire for approval of the historic marker. Members acknowledged that state approval is not guaranteed and that the review process may require additional time.

Mr. Croes discussed the remaining documentation needed to complete the application, including a letter from the Board of Selectmen confirming that the proposed location presents no traffic concerns.

The Commission noted that the alternate location may provide a safer setting because it is outside a passing zone and offers space for visitors to pull off the roadway.

Ms. Colby recognized John Croes for the extensive historical research he has completed in support of the project.

G. New Business:

Correspondence from Noel's Tree Farm

[Circumferential Highway Working Maps](#)

Ms. Colby reviewed a letter from Noel's Tree Farm expressing concerns about the potential extension of Industrial Drive onto land formerly reserved for the canceled Circumferential Highway project.

Ms. Plansky explained that the Circumferential Highway Exploratory Committee (C.H.E.C.) has been evaluating potential municipal uses for state-owned property that may become available following the state's abandonment of the highway project. One possible municipal use discussed by the Committee is a roadway connection to NH Route 102, which could improve access to commercially zoned property.

Ms. Plansky emphasized that no proposal has been developed, no decisions have been made, and no warrant articles or engineering plans exist. The Committee's role remains exploratory and is limited to evaluating potential future uses of the property.

The Commission discussed concerns raised in the letter regarding wetlands, neighboring properties, and possible impacts to the tree farm. Members noted that additional site visits and discussions with affected property owners will occur before any recommendations are considered.

Ms. Colby stated that a draft response acknowledging receipt of the letter would be prepared for Commission review before being sent.

H. Other Business:**Historical Society Update**

The Commission reported on its continued collaboration with the Litchfield Historical Society in preparation for the Town's 250th Celebration.

Dr. Calawa highlighted the extensive volunteer effort to prepare new exhibits and renovate display areas within the Historical Society building. A newly restored Griffin Tavern storeroom will open during the Celebration, featuring original tavern furnishings that had been preserved in storage for many years.

Dr. Calawa also announced a special Revolutionary War exhibit featuring historically significant artifacts, including:

- a. An early copy of the Declaration of Independence.
- b. A broadside announcing the end of the Revolutionary War, dated March 23, 1783.
- c. The original Bretton Farm Book, dating from the late 1600s and early 1700s.
- d. Documents signed by Matthew Thornton and Josiah Bartlett, both signers of the Declaration of Independence.
- e. A silhouette portrait of George Washington.
- f. Original store ledgers, including one dating to 1817.
- g. The church's original pewter communion service.
- h. A Revolutionary War walking stick carried by Major Asa Senter (1756 – 1834), a member of George Washington's private guard who crossed the Delaware River on December 25, 1776. The walking stick was taken from a Hessian soldier during the Battle of Trenton and later inscribed with Major Senter's name.

Members encouraged residents to attend the Celebration and visit the exhibits, noting the historical significance of the artifacts on display.

Ms. Colby recognized Darcy Donahue for her extensive work cleaning gravestones at the Old Town Center cemetery. She thanked the Conservation Commission for improving the grounds surrounding the Historical Society and assisting with moving exhibit materials into the new display area.

I. Adjournment:

Motion: (S. Calawa/ D. Plansky) Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Discussion: None

Vote: (3-0-0) The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Sullivan
Heritage Commission Recording Secretary