

HERITAGE COMMISSION

The creation of the Rye Heritage Commission was authorized by the voters in March 2011 (Town Meeting Warrant Article VII) in accordance with RSA 674:44-a and 674:44-b; and the commission was established by the Select Board in July of 2011. The Rye Heritage Commission is established in accordance with RSA 673 for the proper recognition, use, and protection of resources, tangible or intangible, primarily man-made, that are valued for their historic, cultural, aesthetic, or community significance within their natural, built, or cultural contexts.

The Commission has advisory and review authority to survey and inventory all cultural resources and to conduct research and publish findings, including reports, to establish the legal basis for a district and preparation of heritage district ordinances within the Town prior to adoption or amendment, as provided in RSA 675:6. Its advisory functions include assisting the Planning Board, as requested, in the development and review of those sections of the Master Plan which address cultural and historic resources. Upon request, the Commission will advise local agencies and other local boards in their review of requests on matters affecting or potentially affecting cultural and historic resources. The Heritage Commission will coordinate activities with appropriate service organizations and nonprofit groups. Part of its mission will be to publicize its activities. The Commission may hire consultants and contractors as needed.

As part of the effort to document the historic and cultural resources in the Town of Rye, the Commission will sponsor projects to map and record the grave markers and to document houses over 150 years old. A Heritage Marker Program to recognize buildings in Rye that contribute in some positive way to the appreciation and understanding of the Town's unique architectural and historical heritage has begun. Hand painted signs are proposed for buildings that are at least

50 years old, that are well maintained, and that retain the integrity of their original design. The program is voluntary and does not impose any property restrictions. The markers will identify buildings of historical and architectural significance, and will serve to heighten community awareness, while encouraging the continued care and preservation of buildings and neighborhoods. Featured on each marker is the date of the construction of the building. If you have any interest, please contact Alex Herlihy at the Rye Historical Society Museum abutting the Public Library.

Because the loss of historic and cultural landmarks concerns the citizenry of Rye, any demolition of a property more than 65 years old and 500 square feet requires a demolition permit approved by the Demolition Review Committee. The Demolition Review Committee members are appointed by the Chairman of the Heritage Commission. The application for demolition may be obtained on the Town of Rye website.

The current members of the Heritage Commission are appointed by the Select Board for staggered three-year terms. There are seven members and five alternates. The Heritage Commission meets on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30PM in the Court Room at Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

The Heritage Fund accepts donations from citizens and Foundations of funds and properties, both real and personal, in the name of the Town for the acquisition of significant properties for the purpose of preserving the historical and cultural resources of the Town of Rye.