



The Derry Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 6, 2026

7:00 PM – 3rd Floor Training Room

Derry Municipal Center

Present: Paul Lindemann, Chairperson, Lynne Mari (via Zoom), TJ Cullinane, Jerry LaCorte

Alternates: Joel Cameron, Janet Wetherbee

A quorum was present.

Absent: Aurora Wetherbee (Alternate)

Guests: Jim Dietzel (Zoning Board), Rick Holmes (former Town Historian)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Commission had already approved the February Meeting Minutes.

2. Introductions and Quorum

Introductions were made. A quorum was confirmed (four voting members present).

3. Chairperson's Report and Commission Priorities

The Chair reviewed near-term priorities and ongoing needs for museum operations and Commission work.

- Continue organizing the museum and office spaces; refine exhibits.
- Continue inventory work and data entry in the Omeka collections database.
- Prepare for the next major public event: Derry Derby Day / Alan Shepard Day (May 2), including staffing and potential activities.

- Increase trained docent coverage to support expanded museum open hours (currently Wednesdays, 6:00–7:30 PM).

4. Old Business

4.1 Boston Post Cane Holder Search

- The Chair reported that launching the Boston Post Cane Holder search is planned for next month.

4.2 Municipal Center Display Cases

- The Commission manages two display cases at the Municipal Center; at least one case should be refreshed this month.
- Plan: discuss specific display update plans by email; volunteers welcomed.

4.3 America 250th Planning and Junior Historians Research

- Plans underway for a Revolutionary War cemetery tour in July (dates to be finalized).
- TJ Cullinane reported a planned talk at the Derry Public Library around August 18 on Derry men at the Battle of Bennington, and a John Stark talk on September 19 at the Auburn Public Library (Duck Race Day).
- Summer scavenger hunts are planned; the museum suggested including the historic “powder horn” as a featured item.
- Junior Historians continue compiling names of Derry men who served in the Revolutionary War, with the long-term goal of presenting to Town Council to support creation of a monument/memorial.

5. Derry Museum of History Operations and Exhibit Updates

5.1 Inventory of Cabinets / Collections Work

- An ongoing project is inventorying the contents of museum base cabinets; once cataloged, the team will develop a clearer organizational scheme.

5.2 Tactical Exhibit Improvements / Display Case Relocation

- A proposed exhibit improvement will relocate and better present first-responder artifacts using a tall, lit glass cabinet donated by Lynne Mari’s family.
- A second cabinet will be moved closer to the Revolutionary War area to support improved display of related artifacts.
- Jerry LaCorte will coordinate a small “work party” (3–4 people) to move artifacts and cabinets in an organized way, clean as needed, and avoid leaving the museum in a partially-disassembled state for regular open hours.
- Plan: schedule the work party via the Heritage Commission email list; target within the next two weeks (weekday or weekend).

5.3 Off-Site Storage Units and Access to Research Materials

- The museum maintains two off-site storage units (a 10×20 unit containing a historic sleigh and buggy, and a 10×10 unit with file cabinets and stored materials).
- Discussion focused on improving access to the research files and reducing clutter by moving bins/materials from the 10×10 unit to the larger 10×20 unit where feasible.
- Rick Holmes confirmed that many of the file-cabinet contents represent extensive historical research resources intended for the Town's use; he requested ongoing access.

5.4 Deaccession / Puppetry Collection (Nikki Tilroe)

- Members discussed the Nikki Tilroe puppetry materials and related items in storage.
- Consensus: do not deaccession items without Rick Holmes's involvement and guidance; he offered to help identify and explain items and their significance.
- Plan: schedule one or more review sessions where items are staged for review; record Rick's explanations on video to preserve context and support future decisions/exhibit planning.

5.5 Museum Store / Publications

- Members discussed bringing back into service a glass-front cabinet previously used for "store" items (shirts/books, etc.).
- A significant quantity of "Houses of West Derry" blue books was noted in storage; potential future use includes display and/or sale through the museum store cabinet.

6. Social Media and Public Engagement

- Lynne Mari reported successful engagement from posting scanned postcards (e.g., 1960s street-corner postcard post receiving significant likes).
- Plan: continue postcard-based posts and consult Rick Holmes to help identify people/places in historic photos; Chair to enable needed Facebook admin access as appropriate.

7. May 2: Derry Derby Day / Alan Shepard Day

The Commission discussed plans for staffing and visitor engagement during the May 2 event.

- Museum will be open 11:00 AM–2:00 PM; previous similar events have drawn 70–80 visitors.
- Plan includes selfie/photo opportunities using existing astronaut and Alan Shepard cutouts and interactive "hands-on" approaches where appropriate.
- Additional kid-activity ideas were discussed (e.g., simple crafts), recognizing space/staffing constraints.
- Pre-event exhibit refresh: TJ Cullinane noted plans to work with Neil Valentino to refresh an Alan Shepard headline display using preserved newspaper headlines (weekend prior).
- Initial staffing indications: Paul Lindemann expects to be available; several participants anticipated being out of town.

8. Outreach Report (TJ Cullinane)

- Pinkerton Academy Social Studies Week: four presentations planned (two on April 20 and two on April 22), co-presented with Autumn Miller (Junior Historian; Miss Teen New Hampshire).
- Topics include Pinkerton in the Civil War and Pinkerton in World War I; plan includes artifacts/uniform demonstrations and coordination with school security for any replica/prop items.
- Memorial Day Parade: Joel Cameron's group will represent the Civil War period as part of the American Legion "pageant of history" for the 250th anniversary year; potential collaboration with Junior Historians discussed.
- Auburn outreach: continued planning for the September 19 John Stark talk in Auburn (Duck Race Day).

9. Items Raised by Rick Holmes (Former Town Historian)

Rick Holmes provided updates, requests, and historical items for Commission consideration.

- Requested awareness regarding a missing ocean-born Mary mourning necklace/brooch (historical artifact).
- Asked the Chair to check with Karen regarding museum materials previously stored off-site (e.g., cards/bobbleheads/uniform items).
- Provided materials/receipts related to recent historical purchases and discussed a previously uncashed reimbursement check; also noted petty cash from the former Derry Historical Society.
- Offered additional trolley/railroad photographic materials that could support a future exhibit.

10. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made (TJ Cullinane) and seconded; (Jerry LaCorte); motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted: 
Paul Lindemann, Chairperson