



The Derry Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 3, 2026
7:00 PM – 3rd Floor Training Room
Derry Municipal Center

Present: Paul Lindemann, Chairperson, Lynne Mari, Gerald "Jerry" LaCorte
Alternates: Aurora Wetherbee, Janet Wetherbee
Absent: Joel Cameron (Alternate), TJ Cullinane (Member)
Guest: Brendena Fleming (owner of the historic McKinney dairy farm property, now Pumpkin Wall Farm, in Derry)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and introductions followed. A quorum was acknowledged.

2. Guest Presentation — Historic McKinney Dairy Farm

Ms. Fleming requested help researching the former McKinney dairy farm, particularly its history from approximately 1920 to 1954. She described an 1869 farmhouse, formerly Elmcrest Farm, and the care farm and animal sanctuary now operating there. She outlined collaboration with McKinney descendants on a planned name change recognizing the historic farm, a possible ribbon cutting, and a long-term vision for continued nonprofit and community use of the property.

Members recommended the Derry Public Library's newspaper archives, deed research, and consultation with local historians. The Chair agreed to contact Rick Holmes, TJ Cullinane, and Mark Mastromarino and coordinate further research. Members suggested timing a public announcement after Derryfest. Ms. Fleming also explained she was referred to the Building Department regarding proposed parking changes and signage. No property, funding or project approval was requested or granted.

3. Prior Minutes and Administrative Updates

The Chair reported that the June minutes had received email approval from the attending members except Joel, whose response remained outstanding, and stated that he would submit them as approved by a majority. No new motion or vote on the minutes was recorded at this meeting.

4. Recent Accomplishments

Recent accomplishments included three successful booths at the Derry Homegrown Farm & Artisan Market, museum exhibit improvements and an updated Town Hall display. The Chair will process outstanding expense reimbursements.

5. Old Business

Boston Post Cane search

The Chair will update and circulate the search announcement, confirm information about the prior recipient, and determine inquiry procedures and replica-cane arrangements. Eligibility discussed was age 90 or older, current Derry residence and residence in Derry for the preceding five years; the oldest qualifying resident would be selected. Publicity would include local media, social media and Town Council outreach. Janet volunteered to serve as an inquiry coordinator.

Town Hall display

Members supported using the upcoming farmers market materials on the settlement of Nutfield and the First Parish Meetinghouse preservation project to refresh the left display cabinet. The right cabinet would remain in place for the time being.

Museum virtual phone and voicemail service — motion approved

The Museum has been without a phone line for several months, and the Chair presented possible virtual phone number and voicemail services to fill this gap. Jerry moved to establish a museum virtual voicemail service through NumberBarn at \$4.99 per month. Lynne seconded the motion. Following a voice vote, the Chair announced no opposition and declared the motion passed. The Chair will establish the service, with voicemail notifications and transcription routed by email for volunteer follow-up.

6. Museum Events and Staffing

Farmers Market — August 5

The final booth of the Museum's four-market series will feature the Nutfield settlement and Meetinghouse history and preservation. The Chair will bring materials and arrive at approximately 2:15 p.m. for setup; market hours are 3–7 p.m. Members will finalize setup, relief coverage, and opening the museum at 6 p.m. by text, including absent TJ in the coordination.

Summer Chill Out — August 14

The museum plans to participate in the Town's event from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Municipal Center with Hood-related historical materials. Organizers were expected to provide a canopy and table. The Chair will transport materials, with additional staffing to be confirmed. Materials are to be assembled during museum hours on August 12.

Derryfest — September 19

Members supported repeating the Civil War theme with reenactors, subject to confirmation with Joel. The event runs 10 a.m.–4 p.m., with setup earlier and cleanup afterward. Members will advise the Chair of availability so shifts can be arranged. The booth may offer TJ's Civil War book. TJ's availability was uncertain because of another possible commitment.

Regular museum coverage

Members were asked to notify the Chair of Wednesday absences until a shared online calendar is available. Recent attendance had improved, particularly following farmers market outreach.

7. Junior Historians and Collections

Members discussed rebuilding the Junior Historians group as older students move on. Lynne agreed to help lead the effort, with support from other members. School contacts, former participants and Derryfest were identified as recruiting avenues. Proposed projects included artifact cataloging and painting or installing prepared slats at Lucy Gregg's cemetery plot, with a possible September work party. Members will develop defined projects and match tasks to student interests.

The Chair proposed winter training to enter the backlog of several hundred inventory sheets into the Omeka online collections database. Improved records would support research, exhibit preparation, and locating artifacts. Members and junior historians could perform data entry remotely after training.

White cabinets, books and deaccessioning

The white-cabinet inventory was reported complete and grouped by subject. Members will schedule a separate work session to reorganize the contents. Lynne and Janet planned to begin reviewing boxed books the following day. Books must be checked against the 2011 inventory and Rick Holmes's requested review respected before disposal. The Chair will revisit the library agreement and clarify Town requirements, including whether appropriate reference materials can be transferred to the library. No specific disposal or transfer was approved.

Sales display and internet access

Members supported repurposing the display case near the Pinkerton area for books, shirts, cards and other available merchandise, after finding suitable homes for its current contents. The goal is more to share these items with the public than to maximize income, and pricing, inventory and payment arrangements remain to be developed. The Chair will follow up with Town IT Department on museum Wi-Fi to support research, collections access, potential sales and future exhibit QR codes.

Off-site storage

The Chair will coordinate moving plastic bins from the smaller rented unit into the larger unit containing the sleigh and buggy. This will provide access to filing cabinets believed to contain historical research records. Historians and members can then review the papers and determine preservation needs. The move is to be scheduled; no disposal was authorized.

8. Outreach, Research and Programs

Aurora agreed to lead increased social media activity, including short history videos and possible artifact features. Members emphasized accurate identification and research, regular posting and use of existing channels. Paid promotion was discussed as a possibility; no advertising budget was approved.

Members supported producing museum business/contact cards once the new phone number is available, with Aurora having professional experience assisting with printing. Existing rack cards will remain in use.

Members were encouraged to propose researched articles for the museum website and circulate drafts for review. Aurora expressed interest in the Indigenous guide known as Old Ezekiel and the history of the property and marchland near which he lived.

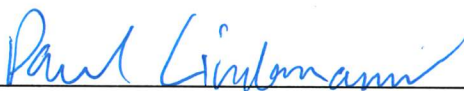
Recent cemetery tours led by TJ and Erin were reported as highly successful, with approximately 50 attendees at each. A Halloween-themed tour was anticipated. The Chair reported a December 1 Preservation Alliance program at First Parish in East Derry concerning the reuse of historic religious buildings, including a Meetinghouse tour. Outdoor Highland activities were being considered for spring, likely May, with a possible indoor Founders Weekend event in April.

Jerry reported continuing contact with Parkland regarding historical information, images, and possible artifacts for the hospital exhibit. Members discussed assistance with a display panel after materials are received.

9. Adjournment

Lynne made a motion to adjourn and Jerry seconded it. After asking for any additional business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m. The vote was unanimous. The next meeting date is Monday, October 5, 2026.

Respectfully submitted:



Paul Lindemann, Chairperson