FREEDOM HERITAGE COMMISSION
Minutes – Final
April 9th 2026

Present: Anne Cunningham (Chair), Mark McKinley (Vice-Chair), Kyle Thomas (Secretary), Sarah Tabor (M), and Alan Fall (BOS Rep). Arlene Knight (M) and Sue Hoople (M) were absent A quorum was established. Also present was Jason Earle, a Preservation Construction Consultant.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm at the Freedom Town Hall. The minutes of December 11, 2025 and January 8th meetings were reviewed. Alan made a motion to accept the minutes, and it was seconded by Mark. All were in favor.

Agenda:

Review of January Town Presentations:

The commission discussed the two public meetings held in January, noting that the second meeting had a larger turnout. Attendees were largely preservationists in favor of saving the buildings. Some citizens expressed surprise that two buildings were being preserved, prompting discussions regarding costs. Questions were raised about allowing public access to the Masonic Hall meeting room for other town events. It was clarified that the current plan prohibits public use of the upstairs Selectman's office because locked desks contain non-public materials , though a smaller office space will be available for quiet meetings. Suggestions were made to secure the Selectmen's desks to allow broader use of the space, which could serve as a strong selling point for the project. However, it was emphasized that the defining feature of the Mason's Hall must not undergo permanent alterations, in accordance with the historical building assessment. The Heritage Commission agreed to handle further public communications , and a presentation is tentatively scheduled for Old Home Week on Sunday, July 26th, likely at 4:00 PM.

Update on Window Improvements:

Bid openings for the window improvements are scheduled for the 20th. The contract covers 29 windows and involves window sash restoration along with the replacement of existing storm windows. The new storm windows will be installed flush between the trim down to the sill, while the original window and glass will be kept and restored. Due to continuous temperature conditioning, the top panels of the storm windows will remain fixed in place, but the bottom panels will be removable. Ten screens are also included in the project to allow for fresh air.

Discussion on Grant Options:

There have been no announcements regarding Moose Plate grants , and preservation grants through the Division of Historical Resources are not expected to be available this year. The LCHIP grant cycle has begun, with letters of intent due in May. Receiving an LCHIP grant

requires a 15-year stewardship agreement and a minimum 50% match , which could potentially be funded by other sources like the Manton Foundation or Mellon. The Masonic Lodge was suggested as an ideal candidate for LCHIP funds, specifically to remove the siding to expose and restore the original 1830 materials. A future Moose Plate grant, which does not require an easement , could be a good fit for a smaller $10,000 to $15,000 project, such as restoring the original door and resetting the steps at the Masonic Lodge. Completed historical building assessments are required to meet eligibility for grants over $50,000.

Update on the Schoolhouse Hill Renovation Project:

Presentations outlining space allocation for the project are anticipated for June, July, or August. While building layouts are largely complete, updates to HVAC, electrical, and structural systems are still needed to determine final costs. Current tentative plans involve placing heat pumps in the attic alongside backup propane. For the Masonic Lodge, it was suggested that the heat pump be placed on the back or side of the building, utilizing the crawl spaces for routing. A proposal was also made to remove the chimney in the Masonic Lodge to create space for a fireproof vault, and to move the town office's new furnace over as the backup system. The commission plans to cut a hole in the floor to assess structural needs, with the expectation that new floor joists will be required to support heavier loads. Finally, the structural report will be incorporated into the final historical building assessment once completed.

With no further business, Alan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mark. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.