

Draft Minutes

**Exeter Heritage Commission
and
Exeter Historic District Commission
Joint meeting**
Wheelwright Room, Exeter Town Offices
October 12, 2011

Call Meeting to Order

Heritage Commission:

Members present: *Peter Smith, Mary Dupré, Peter Michaud, HDC representative Ron Schutz, Selectmen's representative Julie Gilman and John Merkle, Chairman*

Historic District Commission:

Members present: *Ron Schutz, Wendy Bergeron, Fred Kollmorgen, Planning Board representative Peter Cameron, Selectmen representative Julie Gilman and Pam Gjetum, Chairwoman*

Chairman John Merkle called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Wheelwright Room at the Exeter Town Office.

Mr. Merkle stated the purpose of the joint meeting with the HDC was to review the application of Green Bean on the Water, LLC and Sweetwater Realty LLC. for the construction of a concrete retaining wall and crushed stone backfill to the rear of the properties located at 27 and 33 Water Street. With both Commissions present, the information presented will aid in the evaluation of the project for both Commissions to act independently on the proposal.. After the review and an opinion reached by the Heritage Commission, the Historic District Commission would then conduct a posted meeting for formal action on the application.

Summarizing the application, Mr. Merkle stated the existing retaining wall behind the properties located at 27-33 Water St. is in a state of disrepair and almost at the point of collapse. He acknowledged it was a difficult location but the proper applications have been filed to construct a concrete retaining wall and backfill that would stabilize the existing wall. Mr. Jeff Turner of the Green Bean was asked to address the application and answer any questions from the members present. Mr. Turner apologized for the confusion in the application process but reassured the members various State and Town officials were consulted on potential solutions and permitting. An archeologist was also consulted to provide recommendations. Plans of the proposed construction of the wall were distributed and Mr. Turner answered questions on construction details. Mr. Turner did state the vertical surface of the wall would be concrete. Mr. Merkle also added some personal observations. Maps and photographs dating from 1845 through 1904 were available to the members showing the properties during that period. Mr. Merkle asked if there were any comments from the public at this time. Mr. Peter Olney owner at 11 Water St. stated he was in favor of the project and noted everything you see there presently is concrete,

Under regular circumstances an application such as this would come to HDC then on to Heritage Commission and then their findings in the form of a recommendation be sent back to the HDC for a final opinion. In this instant, by having the two Commissions meet together it permitted its

Draft Minutes

members to review the information, making their respective decision thus expediting the application allowing the applicant to move forward without further delays.

The Chair stated he would entertain a motion to recommend to the HDC to proceed on the application for a replacement wall and backfill required for stabilization. Motion was made and seconded. Motion carried with Mr. Michaud abstaining.

Mr. Michaud made the motion for the Heritage Commission to recess for ten (10) minutes to allow the HDC to proceed with the application. The Heritage Commission would reconvene at 7:30 pm. Motion carried.

Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman Pam Gjettum convened a meeting of the Historic District Commission at 7:20 pm.

After being present and involved in the discussion with members of the Heritage Commission on the application of Green Bean on the Water LLC for the construction of a concrete retaining wall and crushed stone backfill Ms. Gjettum asked if there were any further questions.

There being none, Mr. Kollmorgen made a motion to accept the application.

Mr. Schutz felt he wished to view the application before voting on the motion. Discussion determined there was not a copy of the application available at this time.

In lieu of not having the application, Ms. Gilman made the motion for the Commission to accept the verbiage from the September 06, 2011 NH DES letter granting the applicant the Wetlands Permit #2011-01584 and the NH Division of Historical Resources Bibliography Form and Short Report #1033. The Wetlands Permit allows for 522 sq. ft. impact within an existing, failing granite block quay retaining wall to construct a new 39.7 ft. long concrete retaining wall and backfill to stabilize the site and two adjacent commercial building foundations along side the Exeter River. Mr. Kollmorgen seconded the motion and motion carried.

By accepting the application it permitted further discussion before a motion to approve.

When the Chair asked for any further discussion the question of the appearance of the bare concrete wall was raised. Ms. Gilman was concerned about the change in historical materials. In asking what the alternative would be at this time, Mr. Turner stated at this juncture he did not have time to pursue this aspect as he had been actively working on this venture for some two years and action was urgently needed. He felt the Town could address the facade of the wall if it wished when it addressed Dam removal or Dam repairs. Mr. Kollmorgen agreed and felt a facade could be applied at a later time by Town or the future property owners.

Mr. Kollmorgen moved to approve the application. Motion seconded by Ms. Bergeron; motion carried.

Draft Minutes

It was determined the minutes of the HDC reflecting the approval of the application be submitted to Town Planning Office, then forwarded to the applicant and the applicant then sent along to the NHDHR.

Following the approval of the application, Mr. Schutz expressed his concern how a similar situation might be handled in the future. In this instant there was a portion of land (10 feet) with property boundaries in dispute and despite meetings with the Town there was no resolution on the ownership and perhaps should have been considered abandoned. This designation might have changed the nature of the application.

Mr. Schutz made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Cameron. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

The Heritage Commission reconvened at 7:45 to continue with posted agenda items.

- Approval of Minutes:
Mr. Michaud made the motion to approve the minutes of Aug 10, 2011 and September 7, 2011 as presented. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed with Ms. Gilman, Mr. Schutz and Ms. Gjettum abstaining.
- Review and response to Section 106 Request for Project Review on Exeter River Great Dam removal study:
Mr. Michaud reviewed what initiates the process of a Section 106 request, the items addressed in the report, the review by the NH DHR and the possible responses. The draft of the Section 106 report was presented for viewing at the September 7, 2011 meeting; there were no additional changes to the document. Mr. Merkle stated he is looking forward to the 106 process and what it will be lead to.
- Review of the Winter St. Cemetery Survey
Copy of the NHDHR Individual Inventory Form including historic maps and photographs prepared by Preservation Company of Kensington were electronically mailed to the members prior to meeting. Although the report was completed by the stated deadline, a series of events led to the Inventory Form being submitted to DHR after October 1 and Mr. Michaud felt that might be problematic as the agency's fiscal year ended September 30. It is however in their hands for review to determine if the criteria are present to be eligible for a Certified Local Government funding project.
- Update on status of the Certified Local Government grants for a town wide mapping survey
Mr. Michaud read from the proposal he prepared detailing the scope of the project. He noted the various sources used in formulating the proposal. The members were asked to accept the scope of work so as to move forward. Mr. Schutz moved to accept the written proposal; Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried. Mr. Merkle thanked Mr. Michaud for his efforts.

Draft Minutes

- Update on progress of possible adoption of Form Based Codes (FBC) for specific portions of Town

Mr. Merkle reported there seems to be more interest in researching the possibility of adoption FBC in certain areas of Town. The Zoning Ordinance Review Committee is the primary group looking at the changes but a sub committee has been set up headed by John Hauschildt, a member of the ZBA to focus on the adoption of FBC. The Heritage Commission and the HDC have been invited to join the group and Mr. Merkle will be the Heritage representative. At present the area of focus is Portsmouth Avenue and efforts are presently ongoing of preparing an inventory of what is there. . Discussion involved the present conditions of the Avenue, changes proposed by DPW and the areas along the roadway. One area of concern was the lack of a buffer between the sidewalk and roadway in the area of the Walgreen's store. Pedestrian use in that area is uncomfortable, not user-friendly with the absence of a green space/buffer. The sub-committee has and will use the resources of Julie LaBranche of the Rockingham Planning Commission drawing on her experience with FBC. Mr. Merkle did see the need for more involvement before a final approval but cautioned there is a lot going on such as the town wide mapping survey that will play into any decisions.

- Recent demolition requests, findings and recommendations

Mr. Michaud stated the building at the end of River St. falls under the perimeters of Demolition Review. It is presently owned by the Academy and they have no immediate use for the property. Ms. Gilman gave a brief history of the building: a 2-family work force housing unit and Mr. Michaud added more info to the history. Both Mr. Michaud and Ms. Gilman had discussion with the Academy and were allowed access to the building to take photographs and rough out the floor plan. This will provide a more thorough documentation to this property and other future buildings. Ms. Gjettum did remind the group the Historical Society has files of house photos.

- Other Business

Mr. Smith reported there are two upcoming showings of the Fogg-Rollins House on the Exeter Rd.

Ms. Gilman gave an update on the CIP 2102 projects, one being repairs to the Raynes Barn. Although a Conservation holding, the Heritage Commission does have a great interest in the property because of the barn and the role the Raynes Farm has played in the Town's history. Mr. Michaud offered the Heritage's assistance in discussing the development plan and guidance in pursuing grants and other possible funding sources.

Ms. Gilman made the motion to adjourn: seconded by Mr. Michaud. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub
Recording Secretary

Draft Minutes

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