

Exeter Historic District Commission

Approved as Amended, July 21, 2011
Nowak Room, Exeter Town Office Building
May 19, 2011

Introduction: *Members present were Julie Gilman, Ron Schutz, Wendy Bergeron, Fred Kollmorgen, and Chairwoman Pam Gjetton.*

Call Meeting to Order

Chairwoman Pam Gjetton called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building. Also present at the meeting were John Merkle and Mary Dupre from the Heritage Commission, Kath Corson, Planning Board member, Doug Eastman, Building Inspector, and Barbara McEvoy, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer.

New Business: Public Hearings

1. The application of Castagna Consulting Group (on behalf of St. Michaels Parish Community) for changes to an exterior appearance of the church structure located at 93 Front Street; and change in exterior appearance and window replacement for the adjacent building on the same property (known as 9 Lincoln Street). The subject property is located in the R-2, Single Family Residential zoning district. Tax Map Parcel #73-299. Case #11-08.

Michael Castagna presented the application for the installation of air conditioning within St. Michael's Parish and renovation to the Gabriel House adjacent to the Church. Mr. Castagna explained that the Church has already completed several projects for interior improvements and has plans to continue improvements over time.

The first application includes the installation of a condenser unit between the church building and the accessible ramp. Landscaping would be planted to help hide the unit from view. This would allow for air conditioning to be supplied within the main area of the church.

The second application is for exterior renovations to the Gabriel House located behind the Church building. Proposed work includes replacing the existing garage with a conference/classroom space. There are three overhead garage doors which will be replaced with windows. New windows will be replaced on two sides of the building with windows to match the existing. New construction will match the existing building. Fred Kollmorgen moved to accept the application, Julie Gilman seconded: Vote unanimous.

The application was separated into two separate applications.

A discussion concerning the condenser unit began amongst the Board. The proposal illustrates a pipe which may or may not be constructed depending on the building needs. There is only one condenser unit which will be surrounded by perennial shrubs. Wendy Bergeron moved to approve the application for the new air conditioning unit and vegetation as presented, Fred Kollmorgen seconded: Vote unanimous.

The Board discussed the second part of the application for the renovation to the Gabriel house. All windows proposed will be a six over six, clad wood window with vinyl exterior. The design was based on the Anderson 400 Series but since the project is still out to bid, the windows may be substituted for a similar type. The renovation includes a storefront door assembly. Condensers will be located on the North side of the building but will be not visible

through proposed vegetation from the street. Ron Schutz recommended that the applicant consider wood windows instead of wood clad windows. Ron Schutz moved to approve the application for exterior changes to the Gabriel house as presented, Fred Kollmorgen seconded: Vote unanimous.

2. Continued discussion with John Taylor (on behalf of Geoffrey Andrew von Kuhn) regarding the renovation project at 89 Front Street. Tax Map Parcel #73-301. Case #11-03.

John Taylor came before the HDC to discuss the renovation project at 89 Front Street. After meeting with the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Mr. Taylor was encouraged to present new ideas for the proposed connector between the barn and the main building. The purpose of the discussion is to receive feedback on what proposals would be historically appropriate for the connector before formally presenting any specific designs. The original proposal included an enclosed connector with a cupola while the previously-existing connector included an open structure connecting the two buildings without a cupola. Mr. Taylor presented a design to the Board which he explained is a compromise between the original proposal and the previously existing structure. The design includes a cupola with some architectural detailing. Fred Kollmorgen preferred the design which includes the cupola and without the columns. Ron Schutz and Julie Gilman both showed preference to the design without the cupola, explaining it would not be historically or architecturally accurate to the original building.

Mr. Taylor questioned whether or not the connector is included within the jurisdiction of the HDC according to language within the Ordinance. Article 8.7.1 states the following: "This district shall include all properties on both sides of Front Street to the property line or 200 feet from the curb line, whichever comes first." Mr. Taylor argued that since the proposed connector lies beyond the 200 foot setback, the HDC does not have a say in what is constructed. This language conflicts with Article 8.8.1 which states: "Jurisdiction of these articles extends to all structures not owned by the Town of Exeter, the State of New Hampshire, or the United States government and located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the District." The Board agreed that in order to move forward with this discussion, there needs to be a final ruling on the Zoning Ordinance language.

3. The application of Walter Payne for change in appearance of exterior porch steps at 1 Pine Street. The subject property is located in the R-2, Single Family Residential zoning district. Tax Map Parcel #73-3. Case #11-09.

The application for a change in appearance of exterior porch steps was presented by Walter Payne. The proposed steps which are located along Linden Street will be changed from wood to concrete gray granite made by Swanson Granite. The existing steps are not original to the house and have been damaged from pressure treatments. Steps are over five feet wide; the rise of each step will be lowered from 7-7/8 inches to 7 inches and will have the same number of steps. Treads will be increased from 12 inches to 13 inches. The proposed steps will be moved away from the foundation by one foot due to the finished edging of the granite steps against the granite foundation (natural edge). The wrought iron railing which is currently attached to the building will be replaced in kind and attached on the bottom and top step. Fred Kollmorgen moved to accept the application, Ron Schutz seconded: Vote unanimous.

The Board discussed the application in more detail as well as the future replacement of the other stairways around the building. Ron Schutz moved to approve the application as written with the understanding that the steps remain in the same position as the current steps, Fred Kollmorgen seconded: majority vote wins with one vote against.

Other Business

1. Presentation by Heritage Commission and representatives on “Form-based” codes.

Jeffrey Hyland, landscape architect and urban designer for local firm Ironwood Design Group, gave a presentation on Form-based codes, a development regulation which emphasizes the physical character of development and deemphasizes the regulation of land use. It has been gaining popularity throughout the country as a movement away from traditional Euclidian zoning where land use and property values are protected by stipulations. Form-based codes instead look toward building form and street scape without regulating land use, creating a pedestrian-friendly and architecturally-cohesive environment. It looks to the community and its context to create a flexible product which is appropriate for its Town.

Instead of forcing numbered formulas and limits on development which can create a lot of room for interpretation, Form-based codes rely upon images and diagrams specifically created for the area it is being used in as a guide. Regulations such as setback lines which prevent development at a certain distance from the street are completely reversed to build-to lines which encourage buildings to develop closer to the street. Multiple uses are sometimes encouraged in new and reused development, creating a higher density of population and business. While traditional codes use one type of zoning over large areas of land without considering what each individual property needs, Form-based codes are set up to regulate private property development.

Form-based code begins as a public process where visioning sessions are held for the public to voice their needs. The most common process is to concentrate on smaller areas, creating either downtown, residential, industrial, or another type of district. The Town looks toward resource inventories, maps and diagrams, and architectural detailing and vernacular of the area in order to embody the desires of the community. An image-based guide is created to assist with and allow for an architectural review of new and proposed development. Maps and diagrams are relied upon to help illustrate a clear guide for development. The following sections present an example of how Form-based code can be organized:

1. Streetscape standards (medians, landscaping, etc.)
2. Site Design Standards (importance of corner lots, building placement, etc.)
3. Pocket parks (street furniture, density of landscaping to structure, etc.)
4. Building form standards (floor heights, human scale, etc.)
5. Architectural Standards (details, vernacular, etc.)

Mr. Hyland presented several examples of Form-based code within other communities including Laconia, NH, Stratham, NH, and Peterborough, NH. Step by step guides can be created using simple diagrams and point systems to help determine appropriate development. Although the cost can be higher at the beginning of the process, there are many grants available for smart growth which the Town can apply for. In order to move forward with this approach, the Board agreed to continue the discussion with the Planning Board and Economic Development Commission. Once the land-use boards agree upon the process, a community visioning session is held. The members of the HDC and public discussed the process in more detail with Mr. Hyland, asking questions about the process and regulation of Form-based code. Julie Gilman thanked Mr. Hyland for the presentation and requested that he return to present this concept in the future to other land-use boards.

2. Election of Officers.

Currently, the Historic District Commission has the following members appointed as Officers: Pam Gjettum as Chairman, Ron Schutz as Vice Chairman, and Fred Kollmorgen as Secretary. Julie Gilman made a motion to retain the existing Officer positions, Pam Gjettum as Chairman, Ron Schutz as Vice Chairman, and Fred Kollmorgen as Secretary, Wendy Bergeron seconded: Vote unanimous.

3. Approval of Minutes: April 21, 2011.

No minutes were approved.

Chairwoman Pam Gjettum adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian R. Baresich
Recording Secretary