

# **Exeter Heritage Commission Demolition Review Committee**

Draft Minutes

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices

June 9, 2010

Members present: John Merkle, Peter Michaud, and Peter Smith  
Several Heritage Commission members in attendance  
Chairman, John Merkle, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

John Merkle introduced the first Demolition Review Committee (DRC) as a sub committee of the Heritage Commission, and introduced each of the members.

## **8 Portsmouth Avenue**

John Merkle began the meeting by reviewing the agenda, which was to decide if the property located at 8 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map Parcel #71-9, and located in the C-2, Highway Commercial zoning district, should be demolished under the conditions of the Town of Exeter zoning ordinance.

The applicant was invited to explain his reasons for the demolition but was absent. Mr. Merkle specifically noted that the applicant is free to demolish the property as it is not legally located within the historic district and the purpose of this meeting is to determine the reasons why it should be reconsidered.

Peter Michaud, opposing the demolition, proposed the committee shall consider the following criteria in its deliberation:

- The Exeter zoning ordinance (section 5.3.5) page 5-8 states:
  - a. The building or structure is of such interest or quality that it would meet national, state or local criteria for designation as a historic, cultural, or architectural landmark.
  - c. The building or structure is of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest.
  - d. Retention of the building or structure would help preserve and protect a historic place or area of historic interest in the town.

Mr. Michaud explained the history of the area and the building. The house was believed to be constructed during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and was modified throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The area serves as an important gateway into the historic downtown district and despite the commercial intrusions of neighboring properties (Walgreens, McDonalds, etc.) the building preserves the integrity of the Town's architectural history.

Donald Clement, Heritage Commission member, questioned if there were zoning restrictions to dictate whether the property use would remain residential or change to commercial. Mr. Merkle stated the property is located within the C2

Zoning District which doesn't specify a particular use, even though the property is presently used as residential.

Martha Pennell asked if the building is for sale and if it is occupied. It was not known if the building was for sale, but it is currently occupied.

Peter Smith stated the property presently abuts two historic districts and the committee discussed the possibility of proposing an expansion of the historic district to include this area. The area serves as an important transition between the historic downtown and residential districts.

Mr. Merkle made the motion to oppose the demolition of 8 Portsmouth Avenue on the basis of the criteria established in the Exeter zoning ordinance (a, c, and d), and its importance to the neighboring historic districts. He also encouraged a proposal to expand the historic district to include the area along Portsmouth Avenue, Route 108. The motion was seconded by Peter Michaud. Motion passed.

Other suggested courses of action in order of preference were:

1. Retain the historic elements of the building and minimize the building modifications.
2. Move the structure to another location.
3. Demolish the building in a sustainable manner.

The above proposals and motion will be drafted into a formal recommendation and forwarded to the appropriate recipients.

Chairman, John Merkle, requested a motion for adjournment. The motion was seconded by Peter Smith. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian R. Baresich  
Recording Secretary