

Exeter Historic District Commission
Final Minutes
April 17, 2014

Call meeting to Order: Chairwoman Pam Gjettum called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members present: Len Benjamin, Julie Gilman, Selectwoman, Pam Gjettum, Chairwoman, Patrick Gordon, Clerk, Fred Kollmorgen, Vice Chairman, Nicole Martineau and Pete Cameron

Al Lampert – Property Owner, Tom House – Architect.

New Business: The application of Robert Marshall for exterior changes to the siding of his home located at 5 High Street. Mr. Marshall stated that he wants to change the siding on the street side of his home. Pam stated that his packet explains what he is doing. Fred motioned to accept but Pat had a concern about the windows. Mr. Marshall stated windows were replaced to the historical significance of them in the past. Pam stated they have a move to accept and asked if there was any further discussion. There was not and she asked all in favor of accepting the application and all were. Application accepted. Pam stated commission still has to approve it.

Pete asked that Mr. Marshall explain for the record verbally what he is doing. Mr. Marshall stated that originally on the house was clapboards on the front. I went ahead and tried to figure out the best way to replace the clapboards with the appropriate siding for the period it being in the historical district. The front of the house has a good size bow to it. I have replaced clapboards on other houses and found that when it has a bow like that, cedar shakes take out the bow and makes it look more in line and straight, as opposed to putting the clapboards up there. Cedar shakes are appropriate for the historical significance of the area. It really makes it appealing looking when it is done. Pat asked if he was going to leave them to weather, and he is. Pat also asked if it is going to be only on the street side and Mr. Marshall stated that is correct. Pat thanked Mr. Marshall for keeping the horizontal rhythm of the shakes. Mr. Marshall stated he has a fascination with preserving the history and what the town's look does have. The cedar shakes do just that. Pat asked if the window in the top gable is original. Mr. Marshall stated that it was and it is an attic. Pat asked if the trim was going to be a black color. Mr. Marshall stated it actually is going to be a deep caviarre. Julie asked if the wood shakes are going to be only on the first floor or going all the way up. Mr. Marshall stated they will be going all the way up. Pam asked if there were any more questions for the Marshalls. There were not. Pat made a motion to approve, Julie seconded. All were in favor and motion approved. The Marshalls can now finish their home.

Al Lampert got up to speak. He stated that the building is down. He wants to review a few things based on the HDC guidelines. Constructional Engineers evaluation was that using the building for future expansion is inappropriate and unpractical. Mr. Lampert had a letter from Danny Demolition, stating the problems he would run into trying to salvage the building. The cost involved in trying to save it, we were giving the low end. Building was not up to code and the roof was unstable. Above the box where the stucco started was all wood and all rotted. The garage basically has been an eye sore to the town. It sends the wrong message to future developers considering a project in Exeter. It impacts the boards redibility when it takes almost five months of debate on a building that should have come down a long time ago. We did make an effort to work with the board. We had several costly delays, several revisions of the architect drawings. This all adds unnecessary costs and delays to the project. We started with a traditional design, but the board wanted a contemporary design and this caused the building to go

higher than the board really wanted. Now we are back to a design that hopefully addresses all the board's requirements. During the March meeting, changes were requested by the board. Just before the end of the meeting, Julie made a recommendation that the roof should be flat and Pat said that was a good idea. We made an attempt to list all the changes and Pete Cameron wanted to make it an official list but was told it was not necessary. After the March meeting, THA Architects followed up with an e-mail to verify the HDCs list of required items for submittal at the April meeting. In response, unfortunately from Pam to the Planning Department, "I do not see that we need to do anymore. Tom knows perfectly well what he needs to do and so do we."

We just wanted a list to verify so that the board wouldn't say, oh we wanted this. It appears that every meeting brings about new ideas and changes. The board appears to lack control in continuity. Some of the members have taken a very mixed view of the project and the fact that Exeter needs more economic development in mixed use. Challenging these actions puts a developer in an awkward position and tends to impact the approval process. One of the board members on two occasions made public statements. One was a couple of meetings ago, I would vote against anything that AI proposes. Another occasion, just the other day in the newspaper, I would never give him permission to do anything. This shows a pattern of a problem. You have to be able to think out of the box in order to speak to the majority of voters in Exeter. It is not easy and I would not want to be on this board. It is not the most favored board in town. A lot of people have a passion for historic and that is great. This is Exeter and Exeter has to grow. Some things you have to let go. You can't keep all the stuff in your attic. It just doesn't work. Believe me, I have every ones stuff. Some day you have to put yourself in the applicant's shoes. Replacing windows and replacing siding should not be painful. Tonight was a perfect example of painless. First time I have come in and seen anything like that. They did their homework and it went fast. I am also asking that Pam remove herself from the board tonight based on the statements she has made. She has already made her mind up and I feel that she should not be sitting there. Pam stated she would be happy to dismiss herself. Julie agreed that due to the comments that have been made to the public, that she would also ask Pam to remove herself. Julie also wanted to say that she knows the process has been painful for Mr. Lambert and there has been a lot of coming back, but it is part of the process. This project is unusual because we have only had one other demolition in the historic district so it is very new for this board. Julie stated that the board has been trying to get AI a solution that meets the guidelines and sometimes, it takes some time and the communication is not always clear. Patrick stated that the reason it took five months is because the first submission given, we did not have a recommendation from the Heritage Commission. As part of our process, we wait for that recommendation from them before we can do anything. Therefore, that first one was tabled. On second submissions coming back, we asked for a site review. After that, we tabled it for a second one. After reviewing the site, we then had to address the applications. At that point, we all took personal time out of the regular meeting to help work sessions and with Tom to come up with a better completion. In my opinion, we were actually making progress towards something. The application and our bylaws require not only do we approve the demolition, but that we also approve what is going to replace it, so the reason that this is not complete yet, is because we do not have an approvable new building to take its place. Not until tonight, had all of the requirements of that application been met.

For the board in good faith, we actually split the vote apart and actually approved a conditional demolition to allow you to go forward, and that was a conditional approval. So, not until tonight did we have a complete application for what the new building is going to be. You know the process because you have done previous projects on Franklin Street. In terms of being on this board, you are right. It is a very difficult one to be on. This board is all volunteers. Everyone here is trying to preserve the character of Exeter and preserve the historic content of Exeter, which is the reason we all moved here.

Mr. Lampert appreciates Pat and Nicole's passion because they both donate their time to work on this board. Some things you just have to let go and this building was not going to happen. Now that we have it down, it was a building ready to fall over. Everything they touched wanted to roll over. There was a lot of rot. It was just an accident ready to happen. I have only had one negative comment. Everyone who stopped said it was an eye sore. The building we are proposing now is something you will like. Hopefully, we have everything set. We did want another list, but it wasn't available. Pat stated that a complete application would have all that on it. Pat stated this for the record that Mr. Lampert never once contacted Preservation Contractor for this property that was recommended by this board. Mr. Lampert stated that he did contact one of them, but by the time he got back to him it took some time. He told him that depending on what happens, he would be getting back to him. We talked briefly. Pat asked if this contractor provided an estimate. Mr. Lampert stated that he did not get one from him. It would have been a couple more weeks he wanted to move forward. Mr. Lampert feels that Jewett Construction works all over this state and does a lot of work in Exeter. They do great work. It is a respected company. They came down and took measurements. From the contractor's point of view, you can preserve anything. He gave me the low figure basically and it wasn't going to happen because we still did not know what was in the floor. There was not much under there. It is gone now, but it was not going to be an easy process. This is where we are today.

Pat stated that the reason for getting an estimate for the preservation of those walls, was to help us define whether it was commercially feasible to do so, which was part of our conditional approval. Once you did receive that estimate, we asked you for an overall budget of the project to understand what portion of the overall budget is for preserving the walls going to be. Once we did that calculation, it was low. Mr. Lampert stated that was off the cuff because we did not know what the building was going to be, so I just gave you a number that seems to be an average that I have heard from other builders. Julie stated that Mr. Lampert travels in a completely different world than some of us sitting up here. Mr. Lampert then stated that he is just a guy in town who has been working for 45 years in this town. There are detailed videos of the building in and out. Julie stated that the Heritage Commission would like to get a copy of that. Mr. Lampert stated that the town has it.

Fred stated that before the commission review of drawings for the replacement, he asked if there were any comments from abutters. Kath Gallant stepped up. She owns 8 Clifford Street. She has been an abutter for 18 years. When she first bought the property, the word on the street was that the corner lot had been contaminated with hydraulic fluid from the system that was there and it could be changed if it changed use that a cleanup had to happen. When she went over and saw the first phase of the demolition, I said what about the cleanup and he said see those two areas, that is where they are doing test pit. There was a white triangle with a white circle around it. I thought ok, it is kind of in the works. Today I saw the back hoe take those off and put fill back in and around. As this process takes time and I don't know what the caliper or where that fall. Is this true? Mr. Lampert stated that he paid for phase 1 and 2 for Brownsfield assessment. They actually tested across the street at the old shop. We drilled holes inside the building floor. We drilled holes through the shop that is down now, plus outside in the street. Just before the demolition started the other day, the techs came down and took water samples. This is an ongoing program through the State of New Hampshire. There was an engineer on site who came down again from the company. He was taking samples of the dirt and he had a device to measure to see if there were any problems. The problem they have been having is right in front of where the windows were. There is one spot that has some contamination. They don't know why. He had to go down to the pit, break some cement at the bottom, 8 or 10 feet down and take dirt samples underneath. Everything is ok except they are getting something from the street. They sampled the whole lot and there was nothing wrong with the lot. He thinks there might be something coming underground down the street. There is some kind of contamination that gets into those wells. There is

only one spot on the property and it is coming from off site. He went back today to write it up to see what the State wants to do because they have accepted responsibility. There is an attachment to the deed that reflects this. If there are any issues, and they have to dig, the State is taking full responsibility. They had gas pumps and tanks in the ground, but they have been removed. There are no more tanks. The only thing we found was an old coal furnace. It is huge and was sitting in the pit. Julie stated that that topic is really addressed by the Building Inspector, but really appreciated Al explaining it all to us. Mr. Lampert stated that this testing has been going on for two years. It hasn't been just recently. Patrick asked Mr. Lampert who issued him the demolition permit. Mr. Lampert stated that Doug Eastman from the Planning Department issued it.

Tom House passed out colored site plans because he thought they would be easier to see. Tom stated that at last meeting we went over a list of things you wanted to see tonight. The existing buildings are in dark brown and the proposed building is a reddish orange and gray is sideways and roadways. The long block as well as the Blue Moon as well as the Garrison house, all are up against the existing sidewalks. We have also been asked to provide floor plans and my understanding was that they were to be just a perimeter, no furnishings or anything like that. I gave that to the board as well. Pat stated that the reason they asked for that was because when the walls were going to be kept, it was stated that one of the floor plans for the apartments were going to be cut in half, so that was the request. You also asked for our roof plan. We are anticipating a couple of roof tops being 3 ft. by 6 ft. They are on the site plan in white. You also wanted a list of materials and colors. This listing is provided in the packet. Color will be brick red to match the color downtown. Metal coping will be white which is also reminiscent of downtown. The second floor wood windows will be white. Store front lower panel is dark green with a solid panel and two more levels of windows. You were also asking for the heights of the buildings. I forgot that but I did do it for the townhouses. The height of the Gilman Harrison House is about 26 ft. The height of the long block is 31 ft. 2", I believe. The Blue Moon is about 31 feet. From our discussion, went with brick. We got the inspirations from downtown. The sketch of the moldings around the windows is also in the packet. Patrick thanked Tom for showing a complete application and everything we were asking for in terms of making an educated decision about.

Fred asked if the Franklin Street roof elevations will be flat. Tom stated they would be. The water will go through drains, just like any other flat roofs. The water will go into the drains that are inside the building. There are two drains. Fred asked if there were any more comments. Nicole asked about the brick corbel area. Will it be capped with some sort of metal or flashing? Tom stated that it will be flashing.

Nicole asked where the signage was going. Tom has not considered where that will go yet. Patrick asked on the lower level where the green panels are, is that going to be wood wall or wood mill work with the windows set into it, or is it going to be a whole window system. Tom stated it would be a whole window system. Patrick stated that if it was separated as wood, that would allow an opportunity for signage in the future. If it is a wood system above and below, it allows for mounting of signage in the future. Tom asked if there was a preference for wood and Pat stated he thought it should be wood. Nicole has a question about the windows as they seem to wrap the building 360 this style and knowing the first level is commercial, is there a chance that you might want to do the whole system as a panel to get more privacy for service areas or something of that nature. Tom made provisions for this in the packet. Julie stated that this was something that was discussed at one of the work sessions. Patrick stated that on the backside of the Lobster Boat's kitchen they have glass there but they have used a film on the glass so you cannot see the machinery behind it. The nice thing about that is you can peel it off.

Julie asked about the shadow box. Tom stated that it is inside the building. Tom did not show a size for this because he does not know how big it is going to be.

Patrick asked about the esthetic of the building over the top of the windows. It is showing an eyebrow arch. Nice detail to do that. I would ask that over the entry on the Clifford Street side and on the front entry side, you did something similar with an arch. Tom stated why he did not do that. We talked about the townhouses and I wanted to put arches over the front but one is a window and one is a door. He would be happy to put the arches on, but that is the reason he did not put them on.

Nicole has a concern about the pier column because it is so close to the building. Is it really as close as it looks? It looks like it is less than a foot. From a historical perspective, has never seen anything quite like that at an entry. Tom stated that the long wall between the two protruding elements in the corners could be pushed back a few inches away from the columns. By pushing out, would not interfere with the sidewalk.

Patrick stated that he thinks by pushing it out, it increases the square footage of one of the units above. They would gain 1'4" by doing this towards Franklin Street.

Nicole asked if the side entrance was going to be all brick. Tom stated that is going to be all brick. Fred wanted to recount that the entrance way would be moved 1' 4" towards Franklin and an arch would be added and it will be all brick. Roof will be left as it is. Nicole asked if there were any gutters on the building now and Tom stated there were not.

Julie made a motion to approve the application with the following comments:

- 1) Move the commercial entry way on the Franklin Street side
- 2) Take second floor out 1'4"
- 3) Flashing to match the brick
- 4) Brick soldier arches at the commercial entrance
- 5) White flashing over white trim

Len seconded the motion subject to these changes. All were in favor and motion approved.

Next Business: Approval of the March 20, 2014 minutes. Fred asked if there were any comments and Patrick stated he would like to add into the meeting minutes. Patrick then made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Julie then asked if she could add something onto the agenda for the next meeting. We have to discuss the adoption of RSA 79. It is greatly effective for the HDC and the Heritage Commission, depending on what the project is, so we need to know where our place is in the process. Fred then stated that the agenda item would be to add discussion of RSA 79. Nicole stated it encourages preserving historic downtown. Fred asked to also add to the agenda next meeting election of officers.

With no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary