

Exeter Historic District Commission

June 16, 2016

Final Minutes

Call meeting to Order: Patrick Gordon called the meeting to order at 7 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Building.

Members present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Valerie Ouellette, Clerk, Pam Gjettum, Pete Cameron

New Business: Public Hearing: Continued public hearing on the application of Mary Jane Solomon (on behalf of Seacoast Artist Association Gallery) for new signage at 130 Water Street. Patrick was not at the last meeting, so he asked Mary Jane to give a little recap and then Patrick will ask the board what they asked of her because her application was tabled. Mary Jane stated that they are hoping to have a sign hanging out of the building. It would have the logo on it. The size would be 2 x 3. She stated they were thinking wood, but she stated that they talked to a sign maker and he does not recommend wood. He stated that it is heavier and it does not stand up to the weather as well either. He recommended a plastic material, comesell which is made for signs. It is a white material. Mary Jane then stated that the question was asked before if they would light it. They will not be lighting it. It would be hanging from a steel bracket. There are two that they are thinking about. They have not decided which one yet. Pam asked about the color of this bracket. Mary Jane stated that it would be black. Patrick asked Mary Jane if she had a sample of the material that would be used. Patrick stated that the commission tries to stay away from plastics. It is not a historical appropriate material. He stated that the commission would really prefer wood. Mary Jane stated that she would also but the sign maker is recommending the comesell material. She stated that the sign maker stated it would be harder to do the router work. Patrick then asked the name of the sign maker who is Eric Dulse and he works in North Andover. Mary Jane then stated that the Seacoast Artist Association is a non-profit, all volunteer organization. The artists pay rent and everyone volunteers their time. Their main goal is to raise money for scholarships for high schools. Eric is the son-in-law of one of their members. They are trying to keep it in the family and keep the costs down. Patrick stated that he can see that the design they have chosen would be difficult with a router. Patrick then stated that even on a plastic material it is going to be extremely difficult. That in itself, Patrick stated, blends itself more and more to be a wooden sign. He stated that he thinks the end product would be a lot better. This is Patrick's recommendation to the board. Patrick then stated that he does not know about the other material. There is no sample of it available. Pam stated that the board cannot approve the application without seeing the material. She really does not want Mary Jane to have to come back again.

Patrick then stated that what the board has in front of them is: is the material, the ultimate sign the best for in keeping with historic appropriateness and a plastic sign is not appropriate. Wood is historically appropriate. Pam asked Mary Jane if the sign maker would make a wooden sign. Mary Jane stated that he advised against it. Pam stated that the commission loves the design and the size is perfect. The bracket is good and she stated that she would like to see the bracket. Mary Jane did not bring a picture of the bracket. Patrick stated to the board that his recommendation is this sign as it is being a plastic material, does not think it is historically appropriate. He prefers that it be wood. He stated at this point because it was tabled before, do we have enough information to accept the application and was it accepted at the last meeting. Pete stated that it was not accepted. Patrick then stated that there is another piece to this which is the bracket and there is no picture of it. Pam stated she would like Mary Jane to give the board a picture of the bracket. Pete stated that he is troubled that the board is telling

her to go back and do the same thing a month ago. Pete stated that looking at the draft of the minutes, he wants to be sure that the board did not give her enough guidance at the last meeting. Pete stated that at the last meeting, the board did not move to accept the application. Pete then made a motion to accept the application to try and move things along. If the motion fails due to a lack of a second, so be it. Patrick then called for a second on the motion. Pam stated that she liked the idea of moving things along, but she does not want to accept it until they see the picture of the bracket and see what the material looks like. Patrick then stated that there is no second to the motion. Patrick stated that if Mary Jane can note the material and the approximate size of it, that is something the board can accept tonight. Mary Jane stated that the size is 40 inches and it is approximately 10 – 12 inches high. Patrick stated that with her drawing if all of the board see the drawing, it will be part of the application tonight and then they will have the missing pieces. Pam again asked if the material for the bracket would be black and steel. Mary Jane stated that it would be. Mary Jane then asked about the sign. Patrick stated that they do not know what this material is because they do not have a sample of it to see. He also stated that there is not another sign in town like this that he is aware of. This being said, the commission cannot approve the material. Pam asked if Mary Jane thought the sign maker would make this sign in wood. She stated that if he did, it would not be as fancy and he would have to change the design. Patrick stated that at this point, Mary Jane has two options. He thinks the board members will make the motion to accept the application with the materials we have knowing that you are asking for a plastic sign and we have the bracket drawing, it would be accepted. At that point, we can move for approval or disapproval or appropriate or not appropriate ruling. Patrick made a recommendation that proceeding with the plastic is most likely going to be not appropriate decision and then at that point you can choose to table for next time and come back or you can choose to say the material is wood and most likely the commission would issue an approval. Mary Jane stated that he will have to table it because she cannot say what the sign maker will say. Patrick then stated so that the commission is clear, the reason we are asking for this is because the material Mary Jane is asking about, the commission does not know what material it is. The commission cannot approve it because knowing that it is plastic, there is not enough information to say that it is going to be a historic appropriate material. Patrick stated that the commission knows the design could be carved in wood and that is something they could approve.

Pam stated that the commission could have a special meeting for Mary Jane so that she would not have to wait until next month. Pete then stated that he is a little troubled to have Mary Jane wait another month. Patrick does not disagree. Mary Jane asked if she can find someone who will carve on wood or paint a metal sign for next time, would this be appropriate. Patrick then told Mary Jane that she could say carved on wood right now but she cannot speak for someone else.

Pete stated that at the last meeting, the question was asked and Mary Jane replied that it would be wood. Pete stated that he believes at the last meeting, they spent more time talking about the bracket. He stated that the commission proceeded forward with the notion that it would be wooden.

Patrick stated that with the information the commission has and with knowing the capabilities of what the sign maker is willing to do, he is saying that it is not historically appropriate. Patrick stated that the commission knows from experience that it can be carved in wood. If the sign maker is willing to do that, great. If Mary Jane stated that it was going to be carved in wood, it most like would be approved tonight. Patrick stated that she gave the commission a bracket drawing that they can use as part of the application. They know it is not going to be lit, they have the size of it. They have the information available now, but the plastic will not be approved.

Mary Jane asked if they go with wood, what material does it have to be painted with. Patrick stated that the commission has no jurisdiction over paint. He stated that a high grade exterior paint would be great. Mary Jane asked if the wooden sign was way out of their league and they went with a metal one,

what kind of metal or surface. Patrick stated that he thinks the only metal sign that was approved was approximately ¼ inch thick. It was laser cut or water jet cut.

Mary Jane stated that she will come back next month and she will try and get Eric and his father to come. She stated that they are open and running. They would like a sign but they are going without one now. Patrick stated that if Mary Jane is willing to come back, make it very clear about what the commission is asking for that there should not be any questions. He then stated that if she is willing to come back, they would need the sheet she gave the artist, the bracket they purchase, the sign itself, they have the size of it already. She also would need the material they will be using. Patrick also recommended a backup because if that is not necessarily something that is going to be appropriate, you don't want to come back again. He also stated that if the design they have chosen does not fit the backup material, then have something more simplified. Patrick stated that this is his recommendation and he would like to see her come to an approval on this and that is why he wants to be clear on what the commission is asking her for. Mary Jane stated that perhaps on the application there could be more suggestions and Pam stated that she was glad she said that because they have new applications. Patrick stated that the application they have was signed April 16th. There is a new application that came out that should have been given to you.

Patrick stated that at this time, Mary Jane has two options. She can ask for her application to be tabled or you can proceed and so far it will not be accepted. Pam asked Mary Jane if she would be comfortable accepting saying it would be a wooden sign. She would not because she does not know where they are with that cost wise. Patrick made a recommendation to table the application. Patrick then stated that the board does not have a second to Pete's motion to accept the application. Pete withdrew his motion to accept so it can go forward. Pete just wanted to know if they could meet before July to get her going. Pete stated that Mary Jane should be able to contact her sign person and clarify the information relatively quickly. He is concerned because this will be the third time she has come to the board. Mary Jane stated that it does not matter if she comes back in a week or a month. If she has any questions in the meantime, she can e-mail Patrick or bring them into the office. Patrick then stated that in the guidelines that they had spoken about before on page 13 under bullet 6-7, plastic signs are strongly discouraged. This is the guideline the commission is using right now. Patrick asked Mary Jane before she left if she felt she was given enough information to return with in July. She said she did.

Next on the agenda is the application of Southeast Land Trust for new signage on the building located at 4-6 Center Street. Bill Campbell stated that he is a resident of Exeter and also a board member of the Southeast Land Trust. They have just recently purchased the building. They have moved in and are operating out of there and they would like to put up two signs. The commission members each have a packet. One of the signs would be a long 102 inch sign and it would be up above the bricks as a flat wall sign. The other sign would be a circular about a foot in diameter, which would hang from a rod iron bracket over one of the doors closest to the post office, which is the one they use. The material they will be using is compressed plywood and it will be painted. Portsmouth Sign Company will be making the signs. Patrick thanked Mr. Campbell for his information. Pete made a motion to accept the application. Pam seconded. All in favor and application accepted. Patrick asked if there were any more questions or comments for Bill. Patrick made a note under conditions that the fastening is mounted into the mortar. Pam made a motion to approve. Valerie seconded. All in favor and application approved. Pete recommended to the Chairman that on the motion vote to approve and accept, the commission needs to reference the case number. The approval is for application number 16-07 and this is 4-6 Center Street.

Other Business: Board of Work Session – 2016 proposed HDC Guidelines Update. Patrick stated that Julie has been a big part of this, as well as Curtis and neither of them are here tonight. Patrick then

asked if any board members would like to share any questions or comments on the packet they have. Pam stated that she would like to share that Julie would like everyone to read them and get any comments you have back to her. Pete asked who is the preservation partnership that apparently is advising the board. Patrick stated that it is the consultant that they hired through the grant to rewrite the guidelines. Dominique Hawkins is the acting partner. Patrick stated that the commission did meet with her once here as a kick off to accepting this. Patrick then stated that this company has rewritten the guidelines for the City of Portsmouth. Pete stated that he is very impressed with what they have so far.

Next is the approval of the April 21st and May 19th minutes. The commission started with April 21th. Pete had several corrections. The commission accepted the application, but there is no approval. The notes do not state where the application was accepted. Patrick recommended that the commission table the approval of these minutes so the tape can be viewed to see when the application was approved.

The approval of the May 19th minutes, Patrick recused himself because he was not present. Pete had some changes to these minutes also. These minutes were also tabled because there were not enough members present to approve them.

The election of Officers. Pete made a motion that the officers serve for the term already expired, be re-elected officers for the next year. There are not enough members present to approve the election of officers, so Patrick stated that this will be tabled as well.

The All Boards Meeting was attended by Patrick, Pete, Julie and Curtis. Patrick stated there was some good information sent around. The primary goal was to recap each of the commissions and boards since February. One of the goals was to create new member packets and this will be revisited by Julie at the next meeting. Another goal was interrelationships between boards. Julie had asked the commission to elect a person from each board to go and visit another board and give a five to ten minute presentation on what their board does and the importance of their board. Pete stated that he feels the Planning Board is well aware of what this commission does. Patrick asked if anyone would be willing to speak with the Conservation Commission and Pam stated that she would. She also stated that she would speak to the Heritage Commission as well. Pete will take the Planning Board. Pete stated that he thinks Patrick should go before the ZBA and Patrick stated he would be more than happy to. Pete stated that at this meeting Julie singled him out to talk about office of energy planning that he attended in Concord two Saturdays ago. Pete stated that it is a lot of extra reading and he is not sure some of this might be worth a speed read. Pam asked what they were and Pete stated they were Basics for the Planning Board and the something called Roles and Responsibilities, which gets more complicated. He stated that Barbara M. has the master of this. He stated that it talks about procedure and it might be helpful.

With no further business, Pete made a motion to adjourn. Pam seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary