

Exeter Historic District Commission

January 19, 2017

Final Minutes

Call meeting to order: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Vice Chair, Valerie Ouellette, Clerk, Curtis Boivin

New Business: Public Hearing: The application of Julie Williams (for the American Independence Museum) for a change to the existing appearance of landscape design on the property at One Governor's Lane and 164 Water Street. Proposed improvements include a continued pathway along Governor's Lane, replacement of drainage around the foundation of the Ladd-Gilman House and creation of a safe pathway into the Ladd-Gilman House for visitors. Peter Taylor was representing Julie because she was unable to be there. Peter is the Property Manager for the American Independence Museum. Peter stated that they are looking to get three things approved tonight. First, Project B. Last summer in July, they fixed the pathway coming from the museum going down to Water Street and they recycled the pavers that was the curbing around town and used them as the steps. Peter then stated that they got permission to use the pavers and it look amazing. The path goes straight down to Water Street now and it is very nice. He then stated that they would like to recreate that on the other side. He stated that as the commission could see from the photos, it is just a stone pathway right now and is not safe. Peter explained that it would stone steps going up the hill, 30 steps and stone dust on each level and cobblestone down the sides. It is very functional and you are safe because you step up. Patrick asked Peter to check with the Town to make sure there is no easement on the property and if there is, getting a letter allowing the steps to go there.

Peter then moved on the Project C1. Around the building is concrete and it is to drain away the water. At this point, it is doing the opposite. It is sending the water into the building. What they would do is remove the cement around the foundation and regrade the earth so it slops away from the house. Install proper drainage with rocks around the perimeter. This will be sending the water away from the building. Right now the water is coming in and creating a problem on the interior of the building for the exhibits and the artifacts. They would like to send the water away so there is no issue of water entering. Patrick stated that he called John Merkle who is the Architect of Record and asked him if the slab that was there, an extension of any foundation for differential settlement that went in there. Patrick asked Peter if there was a full basement and there is. Peter then stated that it is not a structure on a slab. Peter told the commission that they had an architect come up with the drainage design. He then stated that they would repoint the stone foundation and wall and repair as needed before installing the waterproof membrane and the liners and stones. Curtis asked about where the membrane was actually going and Peter did not know exactly, but stated that he would find out. Curtis's concern is that he does not want to see a membrane above the grade. Patrick asked if the idea was once the trench was taken out by 18 inches, you will build it up and then bring soil back over that stone. Peter stated that he believes this is correct. Peter then stated that it would look natural. Curtis stated that there would be no perimeter drain going in on either side. Patrick stated that this would be helping, but not solving. The membrane will deflect the water away, but will not take it anywhere. Curtis stated that this is not something that the Historic Board sees, so he feels it is not in his jurisdiction to say what they are doing below the soil. He just wants to make sure that they have considered a perimeter drain, if possible. He

also would like them to use a geotextile so the soil does not go into the drain. Peter stated that he will make sure all of this gets addressed right away. Curtis stated that in the end, the commission's interest is to preserve the building the best way possible. The commission had a packet with photos to look at to see what was going to be repaired and replaced. Peter stated the building needs to be re-drained and redone. Peter stated that they would like to have climate control in the building and they have a plan for it, but it cannot be done without doing the drainage first.

Patrick then asked the commission if anyone had any other questions. He stated that he thinks collectively they have enough information to call for a motion to accept the application. Peter then stated that he has one more project which is C2, the pathway into the museum. What is there now is huge pavers that are uneven and not drainage friendly. They are sending water into the basement. They will be eliminating those pavers and creating a granite slab pathway or a brick pathway into the building. This will depend on the price and visually, which one would be better. Patrick then asked if that path would not extend all the way over to the building. Peter stated that it would be along the edge of the building and they will be creating gardens on the other side. They will be narrowing the path, but creating gardens along the side of it and drainage on the right side. Patrick asked if the right side would have planting and Peter stated that he did not think so. Patrick stated that he only mentioned planting because it would help by drawing the water off. Peter stated that he will keep this in mind and speak to the architect. Curtis stated they need to have positive drainage to make sure it slops in the correct direction. Patrick again stated that collectively the commission has enough information to call for a motion to accept the application. Pam made a motion to accept the application. Curtis seconded. All were in favor and application accepted.

Patrick then asked if anyone in the public was for or against the application. There was no one present, so the public hearing was closed. Patrick asked the commission if anyone had any questions or discussion for the proposal of Project B. Curtis stated that his concern is to make sure there are no easements on the site or existing roadways. Patrick stated that there is because Exeter is one of those towns that have existing roads that were horse and buggy and they have to decommission those roads. Patrick will list that as a condition to check for any roadways that may exist with the Town Planner. Patrick had a question about the curbing that was removed for the new curbing. He wanted to know if there was more of that. Peter stated that there is and they will be using it. Peter got approval from Russ. This will make the two stairways match. There were no more questions on Project B, so Patrick called for a motion to approve Project B in this application. Pam made a motion to approve and to check for any ghost roads or easements with the Town Planner. Curtis seconded. All were in favor and Project B approved.

Next is C1 which is the foundation drainage issue. Patrick asked the commission if there were any questions or discussion on this one. Curtis stated that he has reservations on how it is going to affect the architectural character of the building with the flashing on the siding down to grade. It is not original to the building and will not leave a positive appearance on the building. He feels that positive drainage on that side is a better approach. Patrick asked Peter if the photo they were looking at is correct in that the stone they see in the lower left will be covered with a white board. Peter stated that on the other side it would be and that is not a stone foundation. It is concrete. They will get rid of the concrete, regROUT the stone and make sure it is water tight and then have the stone perimeter. Patrick stated that if the parking was removed and it showed a stone foundation and then transferred back to brick and then back into stone, it actually tells the story of the history of the building. Patrick stated that he thinks this has significant value and it is too bad that the parking has covered it up. Patrick suggested that Peter do more investigative work on what is behind the parking because it may tell more of a story about the building. Patrick then stated that he would in favor of doing a little more investigative history

and Peter agreed. Patrick then stated that to cover it up in the end, would be a loss. Curtis stated that it would change the appearance of the building in a negative way. Curtis then stated that he does not feel it is the best way to deal with moisture. Patrick suggested that Peter do more homework on C1 to see what he can find. Curtis then asked Patrick if they should table C1 so that Peter can go back and talk to the engineers and architect to find out what else could be done. Patrick thought this was a good idea so Curtis made a motion to table C1 of the application. Pam seconded. All were in favor and C1 tabled. C2

On to C2, which is the pathway into the museum. Patrick asked the commission if they had any questions or comments on this. Curtis asked if C2 would be stone, cobblestone or granite. Peter stated that it is going to be either granite pavers or brick. Both would allow the water to drain away. Peter stated that the architect recommended the granite. Curtis asked if they would be using the granite that is already there. Peter stated that he did not think they would be using those because they are not flat at all. This makes it difficult for older people to enter because the ground is so bumpy. They want it to be more flat, but still look like the period. Patrick asked if these stones were sourced from Exeter, but Peter did not know, but will find out. Patrick stated that the materials that are there and when taken up because they are too uneven, he would request them to be held onto. He stated that they have a great landscape design and there has to be a place where these stones could be used. Peter agreed. Patrick then asked about the construction of the pathway and what will be the depth of the drainage and what materials are going in there. Peter stated that they are doing this to create better drainage going away from the building and he thinks that underneath the stone or brick, it is drainage friendly. Patrick asked in terms of using the brick, are there any other brick pathways that currently exist on the property. Peter stated there is a brick patio on the opposite side of the building. Curtis asked when the patio was constructed and Peter stated probably within the last fifteen years. Peter then stated that it is in good shape and not falling apart.

Patrick stated that he is in favor of more stone than brick because there are no other brick paths that exist. The brick patio that is there now, is relatively new considering the age of the property. Patrick stated this would be his recommendation and not the view of the whole commission. Curtis then stated that the application they have states flat stones at the main entrance. Curtis then stated that Peter mentioned using brick. Peter stated the museum could probably raise the money for the stone, because it is not a huge area. He also stated that the stones would blend in better. Patrick then asked if the commission had any more questions. Curtis stated the only question he had is whether brick should be included as a substitute or it should not. Just accept it as stone. Curtis stated that either way it could work, but he would prefer to see stone there. If they only could afford brick, Curtis feels this would be an acceptable solution. Peter stated that he thinks they will do what is best for the museum and he feels stone would be better, so they will probably lean towards the stone. He only mentioned the brick because the architect said that if you cannot afford the stone, brick would be fine too.

Patrick stated he would like to make a recommendation going forward with the brick installed there will be a lot more joints and a lot more potential places for water to get in. Patrick stated that due to the longevity of the path, stone would be a better solution. Curtis agreed, but also stated that in the end, he could accept either one. Curtis made a motion to approve C2 portion with stone being preferred finished material and brick being an acceptable alternative material if cost becomes an issue. Pam seconded. All were in favor and C2 approved.

Other Business: Approval of the December 15, 2016 Minutes. Patrick stated that he was not present and could not comment. Curtis was not present either. There was not a quorum, so minutes tabled until the next meeting.

Pam wanted the commission to know that next Wednesday, 1/25/17, there will be a meeting on the new Master Plan and since the commission is part of it, she feels some should go. Patrick agreed. It is at 6:30 pm at the High School.

Patrick stated that there has been an inquiry about the property at 12 Front Street. The yellow building next door. Patrick stated that at one point, the property was up for sale. He stated that the buyer asked the Heritage Commission and the Historic District Commission to look at the carriage houses in the back. This was not anything formal and there was no paperwork. They wanted to remove the structure and wanted to know if it was historic in any way. Patrick thinks that the conclusion was that it was not. Pam stated it was just a carriage house and they could take it down if they wanted to. Patrick stated that it was not original to the building. On closer inspection, the details of it are someone was trying to match the details of the house. Pam will look up to see if there is any information on this.

Curtis asked if any colors had been chosen for the bridge. Pam stated that the color chips are in Barbara's office and the commission could look at them. Patrick made a request that members go down on a sunny day individually and see what colors are appropriate.

With no further business, Patrick made a motion to adjourn at 8 pm. Pam seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary