

Exeter Historic District Commission

April 20, 2017

Final Minutes

Call meeting to Order: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, called 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, Julie Gilman, Selectwoman, Curtis Boivin, Valerie Ouelette, Clerk, Pete Cameron

New Business: Public Hearing: Daryl Brown was not present so his application for new signage on the building located at 130 Water Street.

Next Business: The application of Kimball Island LLC for demolition (of parts) of an existing structure for the purpose of stabilizing the posts and beams in order to restore the Grist Mill Building located at 4 String Bridge. Jeff presented the commission with two drawing plans. Jeff then stated that there are two buildings and one if the original Grist Mill and this is the building he will be talking about. It is post and beam structure and the beams inside the building are separating. Some of them have rot and insect issues. He would like to completely strip the building and get someone in who knows what they are doing with post and beams and fix it with as much of the original materials as they can. Once this is complete, redo the exterior with wood clapboards and then windows and doors as noted in the application. Jeff then stated that his application has two designs and the first design is their preferred version because the annex building facing it has 1950 mill like auto shop windows there and he and Laurie like that look. They are hoping for that portion of the building, to build on that window there and duplicate this on the back. Jeff then stated that if the commission feels this is not appropriate, they have another design that has windows that are similar to the windows they are proposing on the original proposal.

Patrick then thanked him for his application because it was a complete one. Patrick then asked if any of the commission members had any comments on either drawing 1 or 2.

Curtis asked if the application was specifically about the windows or was the commission looking to respond to the restoration of the building and the demolition. Jeff stated that the restoration and the demolition are with the rebuild of those particular windows. Curtis then asked if the building had been audited by any historical person to say what is original or what is not. Jeff stated that it has not, other than contractors and carpenters that he brought in. He has not had a professional come in and certify the building. Jeff stated that the windows in the basement are pretty old and he doubts they are original. He also stated that the windows in the basement are all wood.

Pam stated that there have been several businesses in this building and she is sure the windows are not original from 1650.

Patrick made a recommendation to the board that they are not losing the historic value of the structure by the proposed changes. They just want to make sure the renovations Jeff is asking for are appropriate to any restoration or in keeping with the style of the building that is there. Patrick then asked the commission about the removal of siding, removal of existing windows that are there with like materials or at least historical appropriate materials. Curtis stated that he thinks this is an appropriate window fix. How far is the demo going? Curtis then stated that the demolition might be dependent on what is found when the clapboards are removed. Curtis stated that a building of this caliber he is sensitive to the historic fabric that is there and he would like it restored in an appropriate way. Curtis then stated

that he is not sure about the scope of the demolition on the inside. Jeff stated that the interior has drywall. He stated he would need to get to the beams. A lot of the boards used to connect the beams, have been removed and it is separating. He then stated that the interior walls would be going away and he feels quite confident that they are not original. Jeff stated that an engineer would definitely be part of this process.

Patrick stated that Jeff is not asking to change the shape of the building, roof pitches, not removing chimneys so it is more cosmetic to the applications of the day if the siding was being put back on the building. Patrick then asked if Jeff was planning to straighten up the building and correct the stance of it. Jeff stated that he would like to do this and he will need the help of an engineer. He then stated that his intent is to expose the beams. If they are not able to make it plum and square, they would do what they needed to do to make it sound. Patrick then asked Curtis if he would like to see more detail for the windows that are selected in terms of a cut sheet and also dimensions of the window trim. Curtis stated that he would and he would like to see the actual window trim. He stated they do not have anything to compare but there is certain historic profiles in window trims. There are two different window trims on the application when the windows are applied in that manner. There are historical details that can be done to make it look appropriate.

Pam stated that there have been many little businesses in there, including a hair salon and it had huge glass windows. Each section would put in what kind of windows they wanted.

Julie stated that the commission can not ask someone to restore something beyond what they have.

We cannot make them go back. The commission has to deal with what is there today and how much of the oldest parts of the building that are still there that we can see from our district. Patrick stated that he agrees, but when they talk about restoring something historical, if the current window pattern on the back is not historical and there are photographs that show a historical layout, we should at least bring that forward to say, was this the original design. Pete then commented that he is not sure how back the commission is asking Jeff to go. That was what Julie was saying as well. Pete then stated that he is a little troubled because they are trying to superimpose on this applicant something the commission really does not know what it was. Patrick then stated that there is definitely historical documentation for this building and it is at the Historical Society and the commission should have them in front of them. Pam then stated that the commission really did not want a picture of the building when it was a storage shed for the Mill. Julie then stated that it would be evidence of what it used to be. Pete then stated that he feels a lot has been done to this building over a course of time and he is concerned as to what point in time we will select to ask this applicant to take the building back to. Patrick then stated that this is why they need the information in front of them. Pam stated that she does not think the Historical Society has a photo that will tell the commission this sort of thing. They have views from the other side of the river. They have one of the storage shed, which the commission does not want to use.

Patrick then stated that the commission needs to evaluate the application for the two drawings in front of them with the two different options and have a discussion about what is appropriate or not. Curtis stated that he has no issue with the scope of work with the project. He thinks it is a good thing to do and he will be making it more sound so it will last years longer.

Jeff stated that he and his wife are very sensitive to restoring the character of the building and the aesthetics of the building. Patrick stated that the commission knows what they have done with Station 19.

Patrick asked the commission to look at drawing 1 and evaluate it vs the existing conditions that are there. The existing elevation is not original at all. The only hesitation on drawing 1 that Patrick has with approving this design is the difference in the head heights of the windows and the head heights of the doors. The doors are much lower than the windows.

After a long discussion of window size, placement with the proportion of windows to walls, size of windows, the commission preferred drawing 1 to drawing 2. Patrick told Jeff that in terms of accepting

an application and the completeness of the application, Curtis is asking for trims, window profiles and details. Curtis stated that perhaps Jeff could stop by the Historical Society and see what is there. Jeff stated that he would not be opposed to doing this.

Patrick stated that the commission would need this information in order to accept the application. Patrick then asked Jeff how soon he was planning to proceed with this work. Jeff stated that he shares with the commission the sequence of events and his hope was to take this application and go to the Zoning Board. Julie stated that the selectmen are not going to be looking at the architecture or the design. Neither is the Zoning Board. Julie believes there is time to do both. Jeff asked the commission if details around the windows and doors, spacing of the clapboards are the items they feel more comfortable knowing about before accepting the application. Patrick stated that they do. Patrick stated that in terms of what Jeff has proposed, in terms of the proportion, in terms of the materials and design, all of which is favorable and appropriate. The next step is to approve or deny and if the board does not have the information to do that, Patrick does not want to deny. Patrick's recommendation would be to table the application and have Jeff come back with the information so the application can be approved. Jeff will do this. After some more discussion, Julie gave an example and she stated that Jeff already knows what kind of windows and doors he wants to use, so she suggested that he bring in a cut sheet of these. This would give the commission some of the answers they are asking for. Jeff stated that he understands what the commission is asking for and he will be back next month, but he and Laurie watch these meetings on TV and he feels that he is being asked to present more details than other buildings. Patrick stated that the commission should be very clear in what they are asking Jeff to come back with to complete his application. They are, window cut sheets, trim, spacing on clap boards. Patrick wanted to be clear what the commission is asking for. A simulated divided light, which is a muntin on the exterior, a muntin on the interior and has a spacer bar in between. The commission has definitely approved this type before as something being historically appropriate mimicking the original style of the window. Patrick then stated what the commission would not be inclined to approve is the muntins between the glass that are showing a pattern.

Jeff then stated that he is coming back with trim details, window details, spacing on the clap boards, sill depth, side casing width, head casing width, how far the sill extends on the side of the window and he will also bring in the examples for the commission to look at. Julie asked Jeff when he goes into the Mill Building and the drywalls have been taken down, and they find the evidence of the openings that use to be there, will he consider this at all and maybe change the design. Jeff stated that he and Laurie changed the design of Station 19 because of what they found. He stated that he would consider this. Patrick wanted to add one more thing to Jeff's list, the chimney in the south end elevation which determines where the windows can go. Patrick then asked the commission if there was anything else that Jeff needed to add to his list to bring back. Curtis recommended a water table board which will protect from termites. Patrick then called for a motion to table the application. Pam made the motion to table it. Curtis seconded. All were in favor and application was tabled.

Mr. Brown still did not show up so Patrick asked for a motion to table his application. Pete made the motion. Pam seconded. All were in favor and application was tabled.

Other Business: The commission has a request for a letter from the HD from Peter Olney required for the filing of a community tax relief incentive application.

Next is the discussion with town staff regarding minimal impact applications. Julie stated that she had a chat with Dave Sharples, the Town Planner about signs that they are doing all the time and looking at the applications and approving them within three minutes. The applications have been changed and made easier. Dave brought up the subject of a minimal impact application that would allow people

coming in with something that he and the building inspector can go ahead and approve without them having to come to see the HDC. Pam then stated that the commission would not have to do much of anything for signs at all. Dave was present and stated that he has done this in other communities. He stated that he talked to the consultant about it with the guidelines and she was going to speak with the commission. Dave stated that this can be anything the commission is comfortable with. He brought an example of another town that does this. There are certain applications that come in and some fall under minimal impact and this is set up by the commission. The commission sets the criteria. If it is residing a structure. If 4 inch wooden clap boards are taken off and putting in 4 inch to the weather wooden clap boards, they do not have to come in front of the board if it is the same material and pattern. Dave explained that if the commission does this, every meeting on the agenda if you do this and go the minimal impact route, you would put an item on your agenda saying minimal impact report and you would get a report on all the minimal impact applications that were approved since the commission met the last time. This way, you can see what decisions have been made. Dave also stated that two people should sign off on a minimal impact. If they both do not sign, it automatically goes to the HDC. Patrick asked if this is to lessen the burden of the applicant. Dave stated that it was. He stated that he has spoken with Doug and Barbara and neither of them consider it a burden either. Pam thinks it sounds like a good plan. Julie asked if this would be a Zoning Ordinance change. Dave stated it would be and that is why he is here because he starts to work on things early. This would have to go to the voters before it went into effect.

The new sign request application is basically a fill in the blanks process. This makes sense and saves time. Dave gave an example stating that two applications came in. Seadog 1 and Seadog 2. These are two different places and they brought in only one each of the designs. Would the commission approve them both. All Dave is trying to gain is interest. Pete stated that he thinks it is a logical extension. Pam thinks it is a great idea. Dave then asked if the commission was willing to do workshops. Patrick stated that is hard for all the commission to make meetings, but he is not opposed to half an hour before the regular scheduled meeting. Dave will set up a workshop and make up a rough draft with choices to give options as to what you would want to see as minimal impact.

Next on the agenda and other business is approval of meeting minutes for December 2016. Julie made a motion to approve the minutes of December 2016 as presented. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were approved. February 16, 2017 minutes need to be approved. Curtis had a few changes. Julie made a motion to amend the minutes as amended. Curtis seconded. All were in favor and February minutes were approved.

Pete Cameron announced that this would be his last meeting and there would be a replacement for him. The commission told him that he will be missed.

With no further business, Patrick made a motion to adjourn. Julie seconded. All were in favor and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary