

Exeter Historic District Commission

9/20/2018

Draft Minutes

Call Meeting To Order: Patrick Gordon, Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Wheelwright Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chair, Julie Gilman, Select Board, Linda Allen, Alternate, Nicholas Gray

New Business: Public Hearing:

Continued discussion on the application of Bob Couture (w/Home Depot), on behalf of Scott Cerrato for the installation of eight (8) replacement windows at 5 Chestnut Street. Case # 18-06. The applicants were not present so Patrick called for a motion to table this application. Julie made a motion to table the application. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and the application was tabled.

Patrick flopped the two next applications on the agenda and stated he would like to start with the address at 11 Water Street. This application is from Elliott Berkowitz/Pairpoint Group LLC for replacement of windows in the structure. This is Case # 18-08. Elliott Berkowitz spoke and stated that the house has the old wooden shutters that go into the walls. He would like to take out all of the windows and the wooden shutters. He will insulate as best as he can. He is considering putting in black Marvin windows. The commission had pictures that Elliott had passed out. The windows will be two over two. Patrick asked if they would be new construction or replacement. Elliott stated that they will be replaced. Julie asked what the material would be for the replacement of the exterior trim. Elliott stated that it would probably be wood and painted black. Patrick stated that the material is what the commission is mostly concerned with in terms of the windows. Elliott stated they would be wooden with aluminum on the outside painted black. Elliott's architect had a sample of a Pellet window that he brought in to show the commission. The commission liked the sample window. Patrick asked if the windows on the first floor would be the same as on the second floor. Elliott stated that he would be matching the windows. Julie asked if they would be staying the same size and Elliott said they would be exactly the same so that the whole building will match. Patrick asked if the first floor would be commercial with a restaurant or something and not residential. Elliott stated that it would be something, but not residential. Patrick then asked the commission if they had any questions or comments and they did not. Julie made a motion to accept the application as complete. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and application was accepted. Julie stated that the exterior trim is substantial in depth and it is quite thick. She was wondering if the profile is going to be the same. Elliott stated that he will try and get it as close as they can. He then stated that everything they do is not based on the cost, but what is the best and looks the best. Patrick asked the commission if they had any other questions or comments and Julie asked if they should make a comment about the first floor because it is actually not in the application. Patrick stated that he has a note stating the lower level to match in materials the upper windows. Patrick then read through some of the notes that he made and he will then call for a conditional motion with these.

- 1) Wood interior windows, aluminum, black exterior.
- 2) The style to match the existing operations and light cuts.

- 3) Simulated divided lights.
- 4) Exterior trim to be painted wood.
- 5) Full or construction windows, not replacements.
- 6) The lower level to match the materials of the upper windows.
- 7) Exterior trim to match existing profiles and depths.

Patrick then asked for a conditional motion. Julie moved to approve the application with the conditions read by Chair. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and the conditional application was approved.

Patrick stated that he saw Mr. Couture come in. The Home Depot representative stated that he is not Mr. Couture. He is Mr. Rondoth and the sales person. He then stated that the homeowner, Scott Cerrato was there with him. Patrick stated that the commission had tabled this application because they were running a little behind so he then called for a motion to reverse that decision so that they can present tonight. Julie made a motion to reopen Case # 18-06. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and motion was approved.

Mr. Rondoth stated that he had read all the rules on line. He then stated that Patrick had mentioned at the last meeting that he thought the vinyl would not hold up very good, but with the window that he would like to use, it has been number one in the country for several years now. He then stated that because it is through Home Depot, it does have the double time life warranty with a lifetime installation warranty as well. Anything that would ever sag, is replaced and they do not allow anything like that to happen. He stated that he wanted to have one of his installation managers attend this meeting, but he was unable to come and wants anything that the commission would like, to be written down and he will make certain that it is done that way. Mr. Rondoth then stated that the other thing that was asked,, was the location of the windows. There will be the large window on the front and the rest of the windows are on the right side of the house. There are no windows on the left side of the house. These windows will be much more functional also. Patrick then wanted to review from the last meeting. The first was to review the commission's window guidelines. The location, which he talked about. Patrick then asked if Mr. Rondoth had any graphics of any kind showing elevations. He did not. Scott Cerrato had photos that he was showing the commission members. Mr. Rondoth then said that he had checked with Anderson and they do not make a window as tall as they need. They only make them up to 122 inches and they need one that is almost 127 inches. If they were to go with this window or one the same size from a different company, they would have to fill in all around a few inches. Patrick then stated that he does not recommend vinyl. He stated that PEA used these types of windows, and they failed. Patrick then stated that other materials that are out there and available, are more historically proportioned and they are a stronger material and this achieves two things. Keeping the historical proportions and giving the structural strength. He understands that the windows are warranted, but every window is warranted. Patrick then stated that this is why he is expressing his concerns. This is why in the historic guidelines, they recommend not to use vinyl windows. It is also a protoleum based material. Patrick then stated that if they use a vinyl window, they would be getting away from all the historic aspects and things that make it a true historic building. He then stated that he understands that older windows are drafty, cold, leak and present a safety issue. He also understands the need to replace them as well. Patrick stated that he is pushing back on vinyl windows because he knows there are windows out there made of other materials, that are superior and can achieve the same things. Mr. Rondoth then asked if the windows cannot be made large enough in a wooden window, would the board accept that they bring in it into a smaller opening. Patrick then stated that there are companies that make the bigger windows. Patrick stated that there are other companies and materials available, and this is his reservation and this is what he is trying to spell out to the commission. He is only one

voice. He is not the only deciding factor, but these are his concerns. Patrick then opened it up to other commission members. Nicholas stated that he is not convinced that the property in its current state, necessarily justifies the same adherence to the HDC standards that they normally have for windows. He feels in this case, to mandate they have wood windows, places undue burden on the owner that would eventually pass on to the tenants and this would not be good for anyone. He then stated that personally, he is ok with vinyl windows in this situation subject to their presentation at a future hearing with the board. He feels that any window of a vinyl nature would be an improvement to the property that the tenants would appreciate. Patrick then stated just to clarify, he is not dictating that this be a wood window. There are plenty of materials out there that are not wood that can achieve this. Patrick then stated that if they are making an exception for this property, then every future application is going to come in and say that their property should be held in the same standard as an adjacent property that may have more historic value. They are then separating and being fair and equal in applying the regulations and guidelines to the entire historic district, he believes, is most fair. Julie then stated that she is in between the two. She agrees with Patrick on being a resource in the historic district whether you think it is maltreated or does not sustain the value it originally had. She then stated that she is not a strong advocate for vinyl, but she understands Patrick's reservations. She would like to see the replacements treated as much as they can be to what the original aspect of the windows are. The opening size, given they are not replacing all of the windows, just the first floor, getting as close to the match as they can would help preserve what there is. Julie then expressed that she is concerned about the one large window that might have to be smaller. Mr. Rondoth stated that it would have to be smaller or a single pane window made custom. Patrick asked Linda if she had any questions or comments. She stated that she agrees with Julie and feels that something being done is better than nothing being done. Nicholas then stated that he does not think that nothing is going to be done. There is a property owner who is trying to improve the building and Nicholas feels that the higher standards being imposed on him are making it more difficult. Patrick then asked if he could offer a potential compromise which would be the five windows that are on the nonpublic side. These windows are not of a significant size that he feels will challenge the material. Mr. Rondoth expressed that he is not quite understanding what Patrick is asking. Mr. Rondoth wants to know if he is suggesting doing historic windows on the side, the ones that are not really visible. He then asked if he is getting it backwards. Julie stated backwards. He then asked if they want the historic one on the historic side and Patrick stated that was correct. Mr. Rondoth then asked if he checks with all the window companies and they can only make one of a certain size, will the historic district allow them to be brought down smaller to fit the frame. Patrick then stated that there are plenty of things that can be done. Patrick then asked if the commission could table the discussion on the front window saying let's proceed with replacing the five on the nonpublic side and come back to us with a solution for the larger one. There are seven smaller windows to replace. Patrick then stated if the commission could modify the application to speak to that language and the commission members agreed this was acceptable. Patrick then wanted it noted that he is not recommending the tenant go through another winter with the large window not being fixed. Table it for now and come back with a solution. Julie asked if the commission could give the applicant some names of companies to look into. Patrick suggested looking into Marvin, Integrity, Pella, Eagle, Lowen.

Patrick then stated that the commission still has to accept the application. He stated the commission had enough information. He then asked for a motion to accept the application. Julie made a motion to accept the amended application. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and application accepted. Patrick then called for a conditional motion and the conditions will be:

Replace six of the eight windows proposed on the nonpublic elevation.

The right two remaining to be re-evaluated for replacement with materials and proportions that are more historic in appropriateness. Patrick again asked for a conditional motion. Julie made a motion to approve the application with the conditions stipulated by the Chair. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and conditional application approved.

Next on the agenda is the application of Elliott Berkowitz/Pairpoint Group LLC for review of proposed new construction at 23 Water Street. Case # 18-07. Joe Walsh from O'Sullivan Architects spoke. He passed out drawings to the commission. Joe stated they are proposing a three-story building with commercial on the first floor. Two apartments of the second and third floor and two apartments on the lower level. He stated that for materials, they are looking at brick for the front, picking up on the old Stones Building that Elliot and Nancy live in now. All the windows will be double hung clad. The store front on the first floor will be black aluminum. Julie asked about the signage band and Joe stated that they have not really gotten into that yet. Patrick asked what the potential materials for this might be. Joe stated for the side pans, it could be brick behind it and some kind of wood.

At this point, Julie made a motion to accept the application as complete. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and application accepted. Julie stated that Patrick went over most of her questions already. She told Joe that she appreciated the drawings. When she first saw this, she was questioning if it would be an appropriate place for a brick building. When you look down the street and Exeter has changed, grown and burnt, things have been built in different materials. She is rather encouraged to see a different material. Nicholas then asked if the condensers on both sides of the building, visible from the adjacent properties. Joe stated that the one on the Chocolatier side, the right of way is just over six feet. It is 1.8 on either side Elliott stated and there cannot be any condensers on that side of the building. Joe then stated that the drawings show it being three feet off the property line. He stated that the site plan he has, shows that dimension. Joe then stated that if you look straight down the alleyway, you will see them. Nicholas's next question was about the elevator. He wanted to know if it needs to be as tall as it is. Joe stated that it is and it is the shortest they can get it. The inside needs to be thirteen feet to clear the top stop. Nicholas asked about the other two protrusions as well and wanted to know what they are for. Joe stated that they are the condensers that are set back. Nicholas asked if they were visible from the street. Joe stated that you cannot get far enough across the street to see them. Julie stated that one of the things about an architectural drawing is drawn like everything you see is right there. From a car perspective or walking along the street, you are not going to see those. The only thing that probably would cause concern for people from across the river is the head house and the elevator. If you are providing an elevator, you have to have that space.

Patrick then asked the commission members if they had any other questions or comments. There were none so Patrick then opened it up to the public to speak for or against the project. The owner of the Chocolatier Building asked if the condensers were going on the side of his building in the right of way. Elliott stated that he does not think there will be any condensers on that side of the building. Elliott would like this to be part of the record that he and Joe have a different understanding of what the distance between the two buildings is. The Chocolatier is 1.8 off the property line and so is his. Elliott also stated that he checked with the electric company. Elliott would like this to be part of the record because if he is right, they were able to expand the building another foot and there probably would not be any condensers on that side of the building. They might all be up on the roof. The Chocolatier owner then stated that he is in favor of this and it has been a long time coming. Patrick stated that the plans the commission is looking at today is showing it 1.8 feet off of the property line. Joe stated that the drawings are showing 3.8 feet. Patrick then asked if the plans had already been through the Planning Board, and Joe stated that they had not. Patrick asked again if there was anyone else from the public who would like to speak and there was not. Patrick then closed the public hearing and asked for a

conditional motion which will be the following. This one refers to the property lines. The front elevation will remain symmetrical and have masonry coursing dimensions.
All condensers will be on the roof. Elliott stated there might be some on the 11 Water Street side. Elliott stated that he would really like to have them all on the roof because they are out of the way.
Front elevation will be brick overhang to be solid course.
Windows are Marvin.
Signage band will be brick
Side elevation, water table board.
Rear elevation, align the heads of windows and doors.
Add steel brackets under balconies.
Front elevation project sills 1" and windows two over one.

Nicholas made a motion to approve the conditional application Case # 18-07. Julie seconded. All were in favor and conditional application approved.

Other Business: General discussion re: Ioka property at 53 Water Street. Julie stated that they were bringing this discussion here because the discussion actually started between a couple of members of the commission and she felt it was more appropriate to have the discussion here in a public domain. The members of the commission have concerns about the condition of the building. Julie provided tonight some of the back history of the building and improvements needed to bring some light to it. Julie stated that the question really is, what can the town do. It is a privately owned property and there are only a couple of choices. One being to begin with a letter from our Code Enforcement Officer, making the observation that the commission is concerned about the condition of the roof, the open window and the corner of the building separating. Patrick asked if the property was currently listed for sale. Julie does not believe so. There has been no communication with the property owner for some time now. Patrick asked what other action, if any, besides the letter can the town do. Julie stated that the big picture that comes to mind, is that the town purchase it outright. This has been on the lips of many residents. Does it become a municipal property that we maintain and develop a use for buy it and make a deal with someone else to buy it from the town. Julie stated that she is concerned about the interior of the building because of the exterior. Nicholas is against the town taking on that kind of liability from an operative and maintenance perspective. The price that was floating back in 1915 is an issue. He does not feel that the town should necessarily be bailing out the investor in this case. Julie then stated that this is why it has never occurred. It is just not a wise investment, unless someone has a solid plan to take care of it. Patrick stated that the building does have value. It certainly has value being on Water Street as a significant historic building. It was on the list of seven to save at one point. There are many Exeter residents who remember going to the movies there before it closed. It has sentimental and historical significance to the town. He also feels that everyone in town would love to see something done. Patrick feels that at this point, the action that needs to be taken is a communication to the current private ownership to let them know that they feel the building is deteriorating in its present state. Julie stated that there is no immediate danger of the corner falling down or the marquee falling. It is just a concern they have to keep their eyes on. Patrick stated that there has been no structural evaluation done or anything paid for by the town to make a proper assessment of any immediate public safety issue. He stated that there is the potential for this and they would like to see something done to preserve the building in its current state. Patrick stated that the owner has done some significant things in his own hometown that have bettered the community. Maybe the Ioka is not on the front burner for private ownership because of those other things. Patrick then stated that he does not think the private owner has any intention of this building going to waste for any reason, other than it is out of sight, out

of mind at this point. If there is any approach from the town or a representative for the town, it would be a much softer approach. Ask the private owner if they would be interested in at least sitting down and talking about what could be done to preserve it in its current state. Patrick does not believe that this should come from a Code Enforcer Officer. It should come from possibly the Heritage Commission or the Preservation Alliance. Julie thinks this is a good idea. She stated it could also be a combined letter from the Heritage Commission and the Historic District Commission. Patrick stated that having this building restored in any way would be a great benefit to the town. In Keene, NH, they restored the theatre there, which included the marquee and everything. It is lit up at night and just very neat. They have done similar things in Dover as well.

Patrick then opened the discussion up to anyone who would like to speak. Nancy Belanger from Exeter spoke. She stated that the Ioka is sentimental to her because she was born here and it is part of her childhood and heritage. She wanted to thank the commission for having this discussion. She also wants to encourage people not to rule out any possibility including if the town decides at some point it would like to help. She would like to keep everything open and put it to the voters if it comes to that. She does not like to see things discouraged until it is put on a ballot and see what the town would like to see. She thinks this is the beginning of hopefully, a good solution and perhaps Mr. Lewis will step up. Nancy then stated that at some point if there is no solution, when does the town step in to preserve a historic building. Patrick thinks this should be something that goes on the Town Warrant, before that would be to pay for a building assessment. It is not just the purchase of the building. It is going to need such repair. Nancy is hoping people will keep their minds open as to what might be a possibility down the road. She then stated that the more opened minded everyone is, the more likely it will be to find a solution.

Next to speak was Anna Gracer who lives in Exeter. She did not bring anything for tonight's meeting, but she just wants to advocate for an awareness of both the economic and quality of life impact that Arts and Culture brings to our community. She went to the Select Board this week as well to share her observation that the Master Plan did not pertain any goals or missions or milestones regarding Arts and Culture in our community. She believes that if the Master Plan had outlined some of this stuff in the big picture this would help to make decisions such as what is the town's role in making an investment or seeking an investor for this building for preservation or rehabilitation. She would like to encourage the commission to support having the town as a whole and as various committees together advocate together for Arts and Cultures. She stated that most people want to see something out of the Ioka that will affect our lives in a cultural and artistic way. She then stated that she has heard this is something the town has in common with the owner. Anna then stated that a few years ago in Portsmouth, had an independent agency do a study of economic impacts of the arts in their community and that was \$58 million. This was done by a nonprofit organization that supports the Arts nationwide. They have done these studies for other cities as well.

Nancy got back up to speak again. She stated that years ago when a new family came into town, a play would be put on at the Town Hall so the town does have a history of Arts and Cultures.

Julie then stated that the Heritage Commission would be another voice heard from. Patrick stated it would be a softer approach and perhaps at the next Heritage Meeting, this can be added to their agenda under Other Business. Julie stated it will be on there for next month's meeting. Nicholas asked if Doug was to send a letter to the developer and explained it was a safety hazard, would that letter be sent out solely because of the state of the property or would there be some emotional component there as well. Julie stated it would have to be on the state of the property and right now, that kind of letter would not be sent because it is not an imminent threat. Nancy again spoke. She stated that they are not coming to this as an emotional thing. They are coming to this as a historical issue with our town and it is part of the heritage. She does not think that anyone from the town would send anything from an emotional

perspective. She then stated that she is not there for an emotional purpose, she is there for the town preservation. Nicholas agrees but wants to make sure they do not start a precedence where we do not have town regulatory bodies targeting certain properties because of a grander vision of the town. Nicholas stated that he is in favor of a joint letter from the Heritage and Historic District Commission requesting voluntary cooperation from the owner. Julie stated that she thinks they should just start with the Heritage Commission because when something occurs there, the commission may have to make some sort of decision. Patrick stated that if the Historic District Commission becomes a part of those discussions, there is a chance they would have to recue themselves from an application that may come in front of them. So Heritage Commission, possibly Historical Society as advisory and not nonprofit. Patrick then stated that the commission could conclude this conversation.

Next is the approval of Minutes from August 28, 2018 and Patrick stated that there were not enough committee members to approve them and asked for a motion to table until the next meeting. Nicholas made the motion to table. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the Minutes were tabled.

Julie had more business to discuss. She stated that in last year's budget, there was a request for funds to put in a sign outside of the Town Office Building. The one that was there before, was blown off from a storm several years ago. She had pictures of signs from individual companies who made it to the finalists. Patrick stated for Julie not to tell the commission what the decision is for the sign. He wants the commission members to independently look at them. The question for the commission is what materials do they want it to be and what would be acceptable. Julie stated that they have done the HDU before, but there is also the option of wood. Patrick thinks that the contrast to the signage with the darker background and the whiter letters stands out much better as well. Nicholas stated that he also likes the dark background. The commission agreed on the color blue with wider font.

Julie had one more item for discussion. The CLG Historical Resource Grant for the next year. They had talked about a Historic Preservation Plan that is something that is in the Master Plan for the commission to accomplish. Julie will start the process for the grant.

Julie made a motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm. Nicholas seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary