

Historic District Commission

June 20, 2019

Draft Minutes

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

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Gregory Colling, Pam Gjettum, Clerk, Kathy Corson, Select Board

New Business: Public Hearings: Continued public hearing on the application of Morin Contracting Services, Inc. (on behalf of Citizens Bank) for the proposed replacement of exterior doors in the structure located at 154 Water Street. Case #19-03.

Dan Morin of Morin Contracting is back representing Citizens Bank. Dan stated that he is looking for some more feedback on a design for the replacement door and what exactly the commission would be looking for. He passed out sketches for the members to look at.

Gregory had a couple of questions about the sketches. He asked if the transom, the pattern is it leaded glass or just a decorative transom. Dan stated that he does not know. Gregory then stated that he read through the minutes of the last meeting and he wanted to be clearer and directed of what he was recommending and that Patrick agreed. Because there is an existing white painted wood transom window above the entry and it probably has a brick molding. He would recommend that they use square stock for the aluminum door and sidelines. Gregory stated that he thinks in the photograph that Dan provided there is a brick molding on the transom. He then stated that he would prefer to see the doors lighter, rather than heavier.

Patrick asked if the styles that are on the transom that are above, are the thickness of them roughly the thickness of the aluminum frame. Dan stated that they would be because they are looking to do the same size frame. He then stated that the existing transom can be replaced as part of this or it can remain in place if there is any feedback on either option that any of the members would like to see on that. If the existing transom were to remain, they would try to mimic the same. Gregory would not recommend using option two. He thinks the relationship the commission is looking for is the white half round window above is the appearance and the door should look like it belongs with that window above. Gregory stated that they would be changing the pattern of the door anyway by having one center three-foot door. He thinks the more transparent, the better.

Patrick stated that his thoughts would be to have it be a wood door. Dan said that they would really like to keep it one system with the aluminum storefront. Having to mix two products with a storefront system, can it be done. Yes, it can but to have one manufacturer is what we are striving for. What is driving this is the maintenance that is going on with the doors. The bank is really trying to simplify by having a unit that is very stable and strong. By introducing a wood type door within an aluminum frame is two different materials and they would like to keep everything all as one. The other issue they would have with the solid wood clad style door is they cannot run any of the wiring for the security and it would surface mount. On the inside with the aluminum frame, they would be able to run through the hinges. This makes it a lot easier to conceal the wires so nobody hooks on them. With it being within the frame system, not only for esthetics but also for safety. It is easier to run them through the tubes of the storefront system. Dan stated that in his experience, they have never combined the two materials together. It is either one or the other. Patrick then stated that the wood door is more of a desire rather

than a recommendation or requirement. Patrick asked about the mechanism for opening the door. He wanted to know if there was going to be a pad or something like that. Dan stated there would be a wireless transmitter that is push button. There would be one on the exterior of the building, and there would be one on the interior and this would be placed on the right side of the door.

Patrick then asked the commission if they had any questions or comments. Pam stated that she is still wondering what an aluminum door was going to look like. Patrick then made a list of recommendations.

1. Addition of brick mold at the main street opening.
2. Traditional glazing details.
3. Simulated divided light for nine light panel.
4. Existing transom to remain in place.

Gregory wanted to make another point about the brick mold. The frame of the door should be in the same plain as the transom above.

Patrick asked what the operation of this door was going to be. Out swing or in swing. Dan stated that it would be an out swing.

Dan asked if this would be tabled until the next meeting. Patrick said it would be in July. Kathy then made a motion to continue the application of Case #19-03 until July 18, 2019. Pam seconded. All were in favor and application tabled.

Next is the application of Peter Wells for various changes to the existing structure located at 140 High Street. Case #19-04. Peter Wells had a board with photos. He was there with his wife and architect. Judy McDonald. Peter stated that they live at 140 High Street and have lived there for 19 years. He told the commission the house was built in 1835. They are going to renovate their home. It needs to be brought into the 21st century. They would like to do a renovation that brings the interior of the home to the 21st century. They want to keep the outside the way it is now. They intend to keep it within the same footprint also. They intend on using all natural materials on the outside. It is currently sided with cedar and they will reside with cedar. They will be making two adjustments to the house. The first one is moving the side entrance over around fifteen feet and this will allow for a bedroom on the first floor of the house. There are two chimneys. One is a wood fireplace and there is a secondary chimney that they will take down. Patrick asked where the chimney was that they plan on removing. Peter stated it was on the east side. If you are facing the house, it is on the right side. Patrick then asked if it was in the same plain as the other chimney. Judy McDonald stated that they looked at all the photos from the street and they could not see that chimney. Patrick asked if this chimney was in disrepair. Peter stated the general contractor looked at it and it looked like they tried to do some masonry work over the years. The contractor said it was not serviceable as a working fireplace in the current state.

Judy stated it was very interesting to her that Peter and Sally were so intent on trying hard not to expand the house in anyway. The chimneys location really made that difficult. It is right in the way of what they want to do. Taking it away really adds to the ability of not making the house bigger. Peter then stated that they really do not want to go beyond the footprint of the house. They like it the way it is. The house is on a hill with a porch on the side.

Patrick noted that this chimney is not on the footprint of the third floor bedroom. Peter stated that it is between a bedroom and a closet. It interferes with the first and second floors dramatically. Patrick asked if it were not for the prevention of the proposed expansion of the house for more livable square footage, would you keep that chimney. Peter stated that they have kept it for twenty years. The footprint just does not allow for it within the existing space. They are planning to live on the first floor. In order to do that, the chimney needs to come down. They think the removal of one chimney just makes more sense than changing the fundamental character of the house. Kathy stated that their house

is higher up and you really do not see the chimneys from the street. Kathy then stated that she has been in their home and it needs a renovation. The kitchen is really in need and they have been very good about thinking about the outside. They have also made it workable in today's world inside. Fretting about the loss of a chimney in a historic district is not change the look of the house. Patrick stated that in historic homes it has been done before that the chimney is kept from the third floor out the roof as an architectural element. It reduces the overall burden on the structure below. He then asked if they could keep all the square footage that you have in this new beautiful design and still keep the chimney or is it that you hate it and want it to go away. Peter stated that he does not hate it at all. Stated that this was a good point and he had the exact same thought. He said that they wrestled with this and tried to find different ways to keep the esthetic of the chimney. They discussed a fake one, but it was decided against. Then they did an inspection of the chimney. There was no way to stabilize it in a safe way to keep it. This decision was made due to the masonry condition in the basement. They discussed this because it was an option, but there was no way to make it work. Judy then stated that they did talk about the option of keeping it from the third floor up and it was not going to work. Peter then stated that they tried to keep it, but could not find a way around it.

Gregory stated that on the south elevation, the entrance is on the left and there is a beautiful column there. The porch on the right in the existing elevation is it correct that it also has that same column. Peter stated that his wife is pretty committed to the columns. Gregory asked if they were going to be replaced. Peter said they would be either replaced or repaired because they want them to look the same. Gregory stated that the new proposed elevation shows a pair of cottage style windows and then it looks like flat trim. It shows on the existing first floor plan there is a column in the sunroom. His question, is there an existing column there and are you proposing to remove it. Peter said he will be keeping it. They changed the orientation of the windows. They were put in horizontally.

Gregory asked if they would be preserving the existing windows and Peter said they were going to try. Gregory said you can put a good storm window over it.

Patrick then asked the commission if they had any questions or comments and there were none. Patrick thanked Peter for such a complete application. He then called for a motion to accept the application.

Pam made the motion to accept. Kathy seconded. All were in favor and application was accepted.

Patrick then asked for questions or comments from the public. There were none and he closed the public hearing. He then asked the commission if there were any more questions or comments needed and the commission had none. He then asked for a motion for approval. Kathy made a motion to approve and Pam seconded. All were in favor and application approved.

Pam told the commission that Mr. Donnell was present and wanted to talk about something. Mr. Donnell stated that he lives at 25 High Street. He said that most people come here to make a change, but he is here because he does not want to see a change. He stated that he has written his remarks on a single sheet and passed them out to the members to read. Mr. Donnell stated that he would read it and Patrick said that would be good. He read his remarks that are about the plan for a satellite parking lot at 31-35 High Street in the Historic District. He had recently discussed the plan to create the SPL in the High Street Historic District with the Exeter Economics Development Director (EED), Building Inspector and Town Manager. This plan involves the tear down of a house on 31 High Street and 35 High Street. An alternate plan would move the house at 31 High Street forward next to High Street and tear down 35 High Street. Mr. Donnell stated that he and his wife have lived at 25 High Street adjacent to 31 High Street for almost 50 years. He stated that the homes at 31 and 35 High Street appear to be in good condition. The appearance of 31 High Street could be improved by some minor architectural corrections. This house has a spectacular granite foundation. Currently these two homes are viewed across a wide green lawn at 35 High Street. A parking lot would change the view by substituting a multitude of automobiles for the green lawn. Parking lots with their overhead night lighting, modern

vehicles, noise and air pollution are a bad mix when trying to emphasize the towns historic values. As the satellite parking lot plan progresses, please examine it in view of the concerns expressed. Mr. Donnell also had two town maps he got from the town showing exacting what he is talking about. He gave the maps to the commission to look at. Patrick asked who the current owner was. Pam stated that it is Phillips Exeter Academy that owns 31 High Street. Kathy stated that there was no proposal at this time by the town. She called this an exploration by the Economic Development Director. Kathy stated that she is not speaking for the rest of the Select Board, but for herself, this would have to be a major discussion for everyone in town before anything like this could happen.

Mr. Donnell stated that as an abutter, this plan is just terrible. Gregory stated that he is confused about this. There is no formal proposal and he asked if the Economic Developer is exploring this. Mr. Donnell stated that he knows the academy had an appraisal done a few weeks ago at 31 High Street. One can only guess that the reason for this is that they want to sell this property. Patrick asked if they were planning to sell to the town. Mr. Donnell did not have any information on to whom they would sell to. He stated that he had been told by the EED that they have an informal (he does not want to put words in his mouth, understanding between both owners. If they have gone this far, he would expect this to receive an awful lot of push. Kathy asked who he would say is going to push this. Mr. Donnell stated the EED because he is the one who gave him the plans and designed it. Kathy then stated that one of the things that is the job of the town is everybody says there is not enough parking. One of the jobs is to explore where parking can be done. This is a concept. It is in an incredibly preliminary phase and if it did come out, people would give there two cents. There would be votes and lots of planning and exercises. Gregory stated that he is surprised that the EED would even consider doing this. He also said that it is shocking that this has even come before the board. Patrick stated that it came before them by a concerned citizen. The commission thanked Mr. Donnell for his comments.

Other Business: Approval of the May 16, 2019 minutes. Patrick opened it up to questions, comments, amendments. There were a few changes needed. Pam made a motion to approve minutes as amended. Kathy seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary