

Historic District Commission

September 17, 2020

Draft Minutes

Call Meeting To Order: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm via ZOOM.

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Doug McCallum, Pam Gjettum, Clerk, Gwen English, Planning Board Rep., Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Grayson Shepard, Curtis Boivin, Vice Chair

New Business: Public Hearings: The application of Jefferson Homes, Inc. for the demolition of the existing structure located at 110 High Street. Case # 20-6. Before the applicant spoke, Patrick asked if the packets for the commission were incomplete because he did not see everything that was checked off. The applicant stated that he only has what was given to him. He asked what was missing. Patrick said architectural detail, including window and door details, trim, railings, material descriptions, lighting, exterior lighting. Patrick said they have the first floor plan and the second floor plan and they have one elevation. The applicant again stated that this is what he submitted. Patrick said to be most transparent on an application, especially one that is proposed for demolition, the board is not going to approve a demolition unless they know exactly what is going in its place. They would need a complete application showing what exactly would be going in its place before they could move forward with a decision. Patrick said they can proceed tonight as entered, but he will make a recommendation to the board that they do not accept this application tonight as complete for them to be able to make a decision on. The applicant asked where it states that he has to have window sizes. Patrick told him it was under the second check mark on the application. Patrick said there were no details other than the elevation. There is no description of the windows vinyl, are the windows fiberglass, are the windows aluminum, are they wood, This is the information the commission would need, Patrick said more information is better than little. Where the applicant is asking for an existing historic structure to be demolished and something being put in its place, the commission asks for a lot of detail. The decision they make as a commission is not let's go ahead and approve the demolition and then approve what is going to replace it as a separate meeting. It is one in the same as a decision on the application. Patrick then told the applicant that if he would like to proceed then, he could go ahead and introduce the application to them and they would give some general comments to help him and inform him with what to come back with. Patrick then said that he was going to make a recommendation that they don't pass a motion to accept the application as complete at this time. The applicant told the committee what he is planning to use on this new home and he would be using Anderson 400 series windows and they will be simulated divided light. Patrick asked the applicant if he had downloaded the Historic District Guidelines for this application. He did not. Patrick then asked the commission members if there was any other information they needed in order for the application to be complete. Doug said it

looks like the typical home you would develop anywhere regardless of its context. He said he did not see anything in the design that is specific to this context. He would like to see a massing analysis of the neighborhood surrounding this house and demonstrate how it fits into the neighborhood. He said the house the applicant is showing is not unique to this place. He said they are trying to preserve the historic character of this neighborhood because they think it is special. Pam stated that this same property came to the Heritage Commission last summer and they said it was historically important and they need to keep it. She wants to see this same house fixed. Pam said it is an early 1900s house and this is something Exeter needs to keep. It has historic significance to the area and to the town. Julie said she asked a Preservation Planner that she knows to do a drive by and her interpretation was that this is a contributing resource to the Historic District. The district is made up of houses from centuries of development. Capturing something from that period is an important piece of the preservation and that was part of the discussion with the Demolition Review Committee. Patrick said the application was submitted by the current owners, Exeter Hospital for the same request of the demolition. He also believes that comments around that were the existing condition of the building now, which a year later has probably not changed, it was more so evidence and documented from more neglect of maintenance than more so anything else. Curtis said that he reviewed the house and thought about whether it had cultural significance and he thinks it does to the neighborhood. He is disappointed that there was no attempt to provide it for any kind of use and the plan presented does not have any historical character to it. He is reluctant to proceed replacing the new house with the old. Grayson said it seems to have historical significance and there is no information provided. The information they have seen from the Demolition Review, there was really no consideration to try and bring it up to code or reuse the building. Gwen is in agreement with all the comments that have been made so far. She thinks it is a charming house rough around the edges and it represents a period of time that should be honored. Patrick said that he thinks it is clear from the Heritage Commission letter that it is an asset to keep more so not for a particular style of architecture but for the fabric of the neighborhood that it represents and also how it approaches the street. Patrick does not believe that the commission has a complete application and he does not think the commission can move to accept the application and then move to an approval or a denial. He thinks they should ask the applicant to complete the application and come back with something he may deem more appropriate for the time period or the streetscape. The applicant stated that he wanted to save it but when he listened to his engineers, it would be very costly. He said the cost is phenomenal and it would be like raising the Titanic. Patrick said at this point the application should be tabled and come back complete or the applicant would have the option to withdraw his application.

Patrick then called on the public. William Campbell and he and his wife live across the street from 110 High Street. He said the hospital bought this property in 2006 and at the time it had been a residence. He said for fourteen years the hospital has done nothing to the building. He said the hospital was aware that the house was on High Street, an historical district area when they bought the house. Why have they not shown any respect for the dissection and let the building fall into disrepair. Next to speak is Kathy Corson. She said she lives one house in from High Street. She said that High Street is a neighborhood where people have invested greatly in their homes. It is very important whoever buys or develops this property develops it in a way in

which the street has been looking for. She said the ZBA needs to step up and support the HDC. She thinks this needs to be looked at closely.

Next was Martin Meyers and he lives at 113 High Street and has been here since 2004. He said they have observed what Bill Campbell described which is the slow deterioration of the house at 110 High Street. He agrees with Bill's summary and Kathys comments.

Patrick said he would like to go back to the applicant for rental with the public comments that were raised. He did not have any comments and he said he would like to withdraw his application. Julie said they should make a motion to accept the withdrawal. Patrick stated this is case # 20-6 for the HDC and he is calling for a motion to make a motion to accept the withdrawal of this case from the applicant. Pam said she motions they accept the withdrawal of 20-6 from the Historic District Commission. Gwen seconded. All were in favor and motion approved.

Other Business; Approval of minutes of August 6th and August 20th. Patrick wanted to ask about comments of any action they may take in response to ZBA's decision on Tuesday night to grant the appeal that reversed the decision to keep the IOKA marquee on the building. They granted the appeal which removed the commissions condition from their application to keep the marquee. As of right now, the ZBA's decision is that the marquee after six months of being preserved off site can be done away with; As part of that decision, they granted the application to be approved as submitted on August 16th which included four of the letters to be reused as signage on the building. This is where it stands right now. Julie said there is nothing more the HDC can go forward with. Pam asked if there was anything they could do about 110 High Street now. Can they talk to the hospital board? Patrick said as the property owners, they could ask them if they wanted to sit down for a meeting.

Next is the approval of the minutes from 8/6/20. After review and corrections, Patrick called for a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Julie made a motion to accept as amended. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved as amended.

Next is 8/2020 minutes. After review, Julie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved. Next is 8/20/20 minutes. After corrections, Julie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved. Gwen and Curtis abstained because they were not at the meeting;.

Julie wanted to talk about the budget for 2021. She said they had \$10,000 on grant matching and they missed the opportunity for the grant from the DHR but their opening round for 2021 will happen soon after the town meeting..

With no further business, Patrick asked for a motion to adjourn. Julie made the motion to adjourn. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary

