

## Historic District Commission

January 21, 2021

### Draft Minutes

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

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Clerk, Doug McCallum, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Grayson Shephard, Gwen English, Planning Board Rep.

New Business: Public Hearings: Continued public hearing on the application of Robert Lang (on behalf of 154 Water Street Co. LLC) for a change in appearance to the existing structure located at 28 Front Street, Case #20-9. Patrick asked Robert to reintroduce his application. Robert stated he is doing a project on Front Street in Exeter and was asked to stop by Doug Eastman, Exeter Building Inspector after he was granted a permit to do it. He is back with the commission to ask for an allowance to put vinyl siding on the building and cedar on the front because you cannot stop the rot. Robert said it was his understanding the last time he spoke with the commission, they were going to get together and look at the building together. He also thought that someone was going to get in touch with Barbara to set this meeting up. Patrick said that was the intention and it happened to fall right before the holidays and they opted that a collection of any group is putting them all at risk. Because of this, we decided not to meet as a group, but everyone was encouraged to go down to the town and see the sample and to walk by the building.

Patrick said there are two parts to the application. The first part is around the entry doors of the existing building there were cedar shakes that were being replaced with cedar shakes and there were some unique angles there that the vinyl shake material did not allow for replication. That was part one and if Patrick can speak for the commission, it seemed to appear as if that was a replacement in kind and not a concern of ours. Where they had concerns and wanted to have further discussions on and further data collection was the rest of the elevation shows a flat wood panel on the outside of the building. That material is what the new vinyl siding will be hanging off of. Robert said that is correct. Patrick said that was part two and that is why Doug Eastman said this needs to be reviewed. Patrick said he thinks the commission has enough information to have a discussion tonight about this. Patrick said he would start with the material he saw has a good aesthetic but it is still vinyl and he does not see it as the best solution. It goes against our recommendations of using vinyl siding within the Historic District. Patrick then asked other commission members to speak with their comments. Doug said that he was appalled that the Building Department would issue a permit of a building of that age without the Historic District Commission review. He said in this case, he thinks vinyl is an inferior material. He said there are a lot of issues with vinyl and it is not a forever material. Robert said he has taken a \$7,000 loss with this. Grayson said like other commission members, he feels sympathetic for the position that Robert found himself in but the purview of the mission is hampered by what our

guidelines and recommendations would be. To his understanding, vinyl is not favored. Patrick said what the commission will be ultimately voting on is whether the material is historically appropriate. The fact that the material is what it is and that it is going to be changing the pattern and changing the look of the front of the building, that is what we have to deem historically appropriate or not. Gwen said what stands out to her is Patrick's comment earlier about this being one of three houses with the treatment of this siding. She said visually she did not have a problem with the material that Robert picked out but she is concerned that it is not appropriate for the Historic District and for this house. She would like this repaired in kind and she would like it if somehow Robert could easily find where the water is coming from that is posing problems. Patrick said unfortunately, the dirty word in all of this is vinyl. It does not hold its color retention, it expands and contracts and it is proven to not be the miracle material that everyone thinks it is. Historically, it has not presented well on historic buildings. Patrick then shared his screen showing the structure. Patrick then asked the commission members if they had enough information to accept the application as complete. They agreed there was enough information and Patrick asked for a motion to accept the application. Pam made the motion to accept the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application was accepted. Patrick then opened it up to see if there was any public comments and there were none. He then opened it back up to the commission members. Julie asked the members about the sides with the lesser material appearance and what their interpretation was of replacing what is there now with the proposed material because it is the lesser side. Pam said she is tempted to say that he can do what he likes and then live with the circumstances. Patrick said his only reservation would be that the same issues still exist. Will it always look as good as day one, no. Will it keep the color retention of the blue, no. It will fade and it will get dusty. He said put the wood clapparts back on, on the side of the back. Repair areas and replace where you have to and put a quality finish on it.

Patrick said he thinks the commission has a couple of different points to make tonight in terms of calling for a motion that is not necessarily conditional, but it calls out all of the different components of what is being asked for in this application. Julie said she thinks it is more explanatory rather than conditional of how the commission came out the decision. Patrick said how do we trade a conditional approval with the different areas of the building that are being requested for different materials and different patterns. He thinks there are three different areas. Around the doors with cedar shakes. It is the front elevation being covered by a cedar impression vinyl siding. The third component is a request of vinyl siding on the sides and the back. Robert said that is correct. Patrick said those three conditions would have to be addressed in the motion. Pam asked if they could do a partial motion, like accept the cedar shakes around the door. Julie said they could divide it up into three votes and she seconded Pam's motion. All were in favor and motion approved. Patrick then called for a second motion that is addressing the front elevation of the building and the cedar vinyl impression siding to cover the existing finish that is there now. Julie made a move of denial of new material vinyl cedar shakes replication over the original facet for the reason that it is not appropriate to the original style or to replicate the age of the building. She just finds it totally inappropriate to have a totally different type of pattern on the front facet. Gwen seconded. All were in favor, motion denied. Patrick said this motion is for the portion of the application for vinyl impressions on the

front elevation as being not historically appropriate. Patrick then called for a third motion for the sides and the back of the building. The request is to replace those finishes which are wood clapped now with a vinyl clappert. Julie made a motion to find the replacement of the wood clappers with vinyl clapperts to be an inappropriate treatment of the building. Pam seconded. All were in favor and motion denied. Patrick said just as a summary of the application, three motions were made. The first motion did pass and it was a finding that the cedar shakes around the doorway was deemed historically appropriate. The second motion was using the vinyl impression cedar siding on the front of the building to be attached over the existing materials deemed not historically appropriate. The third motion was finding vinyl siding being used on the sides and back of the building to replace the wood clapperts that are existing and was deemed not historically appropriate. Julie spoke to Mr. Lang and wanted to make sure he was aware of his next step. The next step would be to go to the Zoning Board. Robert said he was born in Exeter and has spent his whole life here. He said he does believe in what the commission is doing in the Historical District. If it is deemed that it changes the appearance of the building, he would not override that. The members really appreciated what Robert said. He said he is not going to back away and he will do what he has to do. He just wants to do what is right.

Other Business: Approval of December 17,2020 Minutes. There were several corrections so Julie made a motion to table the minutes until the February meeting. Doug seconded. All were in favor and minutes tabled.

With no further business, Doug made a motion to adjourn. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick  
Recording Secretary