

Historic District Commission

May 20, 2021

Final Minutes

Call Meeting To Order: Curtis Boivin, Vice Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm via ZOOM.

Members Present: Curtis Boivin, Vice Chair, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Gwen English, Planning Board Rep., Pam Gjettum, Doug McCallum

New Business: Public Hearings: Continued public hearing on the application of Roger Smyth for changes to the existing structure (fence) located at 66 High Street. The proposed changes include replacement of the existing fence and change in material. Case #21-5. There was no one there to speak on this application. Curtis said they will table it for the time being and see if anyone comes to speak on it later.

Next is the application of DAC IV, LLC for changes in appearance to the existing structure located at 45 Water Street. The proposed changes include replacing a portion of the roof, window replacement, new construction of deck, balconies and a gated entrance and replacement of wood siding. Case # 21-6.

Curtis asked if there was anyone present to speak on this application. David Cowie spoke and said he was the owner and he said Christina O'Brien will be joining us and she is the architect.

Christina joined and shared her screen with everyone. She said the project located at 45 Water Street in Exeter is the current site of the Travel and Nature Store. It will be under going through some exterior renovations. She started with some historic photos. The photo showed the three windows on the front that they are going to try and replicate.

She showed a slide with an addition that she believes was added in the 1980s and was not original to the structure. They will be renovating both sides. The front on Water Street and the riverside elevation. She just wanted to focus that this is an addition.

She then moved on to the elevations. On the front façade, the idea is to make it look like the original façade. She showed a slide with existing and proposed. The improvements would include replacing the existing one over one double hung windows with more period appropriate two over two. They are also replacing the double, double hung windows on the second level with just a single one. They are also proposing to add shutters to the windows. They will be painting the existing wood siding to freshen it up.

They are also proposing to add an iron gate at the alleyway entrance between 45 Water Street and the IOKA Building.

She then showed a slide with the elevation on the river side. The addition is from the 1980s and they are proposing to remove that and build a new roof with the same pitch as the existing building as shown in the slide. They are also replacing all the existing windows with more period appropriate two over two windows. They are also proposing to add sliding and swinging glass doors to the existing basement level, the first floor level and the second floor level.

They are proposing to add a deck to the lower basement level and a balcony at the first floor and second floor level. They are also proposing to add a decorative hoist beam up at the gable and replacing the existing wood shake siding at the first and second floors. Also replacing existing vertical board on the basement level with siding. This will all be painted with similar color that is there already. She feels this is a great improvement to the rear of the building. It will be very visible to people walking along the river.

Finally, a few other exterior details. They are proposing cedar shake siding on the river side on the first and second floors. The paint color is still to be determined. They are proposing a wood siding on the basement level of the river side elevation. The decks on the river side are proposed to be a wooden construction. They are also proposing wooden shutters as shown in the elevations and proposing an iron gate between 45 Water Street and the Ioka.

Christina said that was the presentation they had for today and she will be happy to answer any questions. Curtis then opened it up to the board for questions or comments.

Julie asked why they were putting up the gate between the buildings. David Cowie spoke and said that people passing by throw trash in the alleyway. He said it is almost a weekly routine to go in there and clean it up. He said they thought the gate would provide some security and a distraction from going into the alleyway. Julie then asked how tall the gate was. David said he was not sure and Christina said she thinks it about four feet tall. Julie asked if this will suffice in their endeavor. She was just wondering if taller would be better.

Christina said they should definitely check on that. David said they would like to go up to six feet if allowed. Curtis said judging from the photo, the gate looks to be five feet.

Julie said that would be her recommendation to make it a taller gate to serve their purpose. Her next question is about the new windows and if the location they are proposing has a relationship to what you are showing us in the existing photographs as far as how far in from the corners.

Christina asked if Julie was talking about the front elevation, rear elevation or both. Julie said the front elevation where they are changing the two windows back into one. Christina said they should be in similar location to where they were in the existing.

Julie then asked why the hoist beam in the back. Christina said it was just thought as a decorative element. Julie said she does not necessarily agree with that and she was not sure there was a hoist beam on the building. Just because of the way it is going to be used now, adding a new feature like that isn't really necessary and she thinks it does not go with the new elevation they are proposing.

David Cowie said it is a matter of owner preference. He likes it but understands other people's preferences.

Julie's last thing is why wood shakes as opposed to clapboards. Christina said she believes that is what is on the rear portion now, are the shakes. The sides and front would be clapboards but on the back they thought it would just create a little bit of interest and maintain what is there currently. It gives a little more texture.

Pam said that Julie covered just about everything. She did wonder about the hoist beam. She said it is not a bad thing to have. She appreciates them trying to replicate the original façade.

Gwen said she was pleased with the application of shakes in the back. She does not have a problem with the hoist beam and she could go either way with that. She is curious as to whether the business in the building, Travel and Nature will stay.

David Cowie said Walt is a great tenant and they get along very well. He hopes he will continue to be a commercial tenant. It is zoned for commercial.

Gwen said she hopes he stays because he has a great business for the Town of Exeter.

Doug said he thinks it is a big improvement. He thinks it will be a big plus for the town. He thinks if you have window shutters, they should be operable. He said he thinks it is a lovely project and is happy they are doing it.

Curtis said on the front gate, make sure to work with your architect and the building inspector. There may need to be a latch that does not require any tools or special knowledge to open. This is just a comment on building codes.

Curtis then asked if the back was a shake or a shingle. Christina said they are proposing shakes.

Curtis had another question. If we are replacing the roof to match the existing, not over framing, then would the upper window on the water side be the same size as the front window instead of a squat window? On the front elevation there is a taller window and in the back elevation there is a squat window.

Christina said they are proposing a little loft space so where the floor area is may not allow for a taller window, but they can enlarge it as much as possible. Curtis said taller would look a little better there.

Curtis then asked for a motion from the board to see if the application is complete. Julie said so moved. Pam seconded. All were in favor and application complete.

Curtis then asked if the board members had any more questions or comments before he opened it up to the public. Julie had a question on the rear balconies. Are they going to have the profile you are showing us on the application as far as the curve on the uprights?

David Cowie said yes, that was the intention.

Curtis then asked what our opinion on the wood shutter hardware is. Would we like to see that as being on this building? Julie said it makes for a nice texture for the front. You don't just have the hinges, you have a latch on the sides that hold it back when you want it to be open.

David Cowie said that would not be a problem. It is reasonable and he appreciates it.

Curtis then opened it up to any member of the public who had any comments on this.

Linda Higgins spoke and said she thinks it is a beautiful, beautiful change for both sides. The Water Street and across the river.

There were no other public comments, so Curtis opened it up to the board for a motion. There are three things they were looking at. Taller top window on the river side. The wood shutter hardware on the street side and the corner board to terminate at the ground level. Julie asked Curtis on the back

upper window, would rectangular be a good word to use instead of taller. Curtis said that rectangular is appropriate.

Curtis then asked if he had a motion from the board on this application. Pam made a motion to accept the application with the following additions. The top window in the rear be rectangular. The three sets of shutters in the front be wood and have working metal hardware and the corner boards are terminated at the street level. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application accepted with the contingencies.

Other Business: IOKA Properties, LLC – update on project at 53 Water Street. Curtis said they got something in the packet that said the sign has been accepted at The American Sign Museum. He said they do not have a requirement anymore or it is unclear whether the ZBA relieved all of the requirements for reuse of the letters. Curtis said is it more appropriate to keep the sign in one piece.

Sharon Somers, attorney for IOKA Properties, LLC spoke. She stated that the intent of this presentation tonight is to bring the board up to date to what is happening to the original marquee and it has been accepted into a new life at The American Sign Museum. With that will go the original letters? The plan now is to replicate those letters and David has obtained a description of a vendor they will be using to try and get those letters and put them on the side of the building. With regard to your question about what the next procedural steps are with the sign, what she would do is suggest that we ask Doug Eastman because he would be the one to deal with the sign regulations.

Julie said that is what she was thinking. She just wanted just to be clear that we are not reconsidering the whole project. She said she appreciates this has found a home and it will remain in one condition. Julie asked if she needed anything from us like a letter of endorsement. Sharon said she did not think so. This was intent to be an information item for the HDC.

Curtis then asked if anyone was there from the Roger Smyth project was available. There was no one so Curtis asked for a motion to table this until the next meeting. Pam made a motion to table Case #21-5. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application tabled.

Next on the agenda are the approval of the minutes from April 15, 2021. Curtis asked if everyone was missing some pages. Everyone was except Doug who had all five pages. Without having a copy of the complete minutes, Curtis said they will need to table the minutes until the next meeting. He then asked for a motion and Julie said so moved. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes tabled until next month's meeting.

The next item is election of officers. Julie said they should postpone it until Patrick and Grayson will be here. Curtis and everyone agreed.

Curtis asked if there was any other business. Pam said the Historical Society has two requests for signs. She said both of these have been researched. The first one is Jennifer Young at 84 Front Street and the second is for 11 Grove Street.

In other news, Curtis told the board that he has taken a position at Phillips Exeter Academy full time.

With no further business, Julie made a motion to adjourn. Curtis said so moved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick

Recording Secretary