

Historic District Commission

September 23, 2021

Final Minutes

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

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Clerk, Grayson Shephard, Julie Gilman, S.B. Rep., Doug McCallum

New Business: Public Hearings: First is the application of Exeter Congregational Church for changes to the existing structure located at 12R Center Street. The proposal includes the demolition and reconstruction of the existing garage structure on the property. Case #21-7.

Robert Hill spoke and stated that he is one of the five trustees of the Congregational Church. He said they are changing the parsonage back to a parsonage. It has been used for classrooms and offices and so forth for the last few years. Because of the cost of housing for pastors and their families, they have decided to make this back into a parsonage. Included in this, is the garage which is in terrible shape. They have decided and the general contractor has recommended that it be torn down and a new one built. He said, as it says in the application, they will replace it exactly the same as it is now except for adding two feet to the north side of it because maybe at the time, it was suitable for carriages, but it is not suitable for doors that swing open on a car. Everything else will remain the same. It will have the same four panel door, same windows, exactly where they are now, same roof and the same siding. He said it should look exactly the same except it will not be sagging. There is no foundation under it. It is just sitting on the ground. They will be putting in a foundation and a cement floor.

Patrick asked if the foundation was buried posts and Robert said he did not know. He was told that it was just sitting on the ground and it is sinking. He said he assumed if there were posts, it would at least hold it up, but it is not. It is sinking.

Patrick asked Robert if he knew what year this garage was built. He said all he knows is that when the parsonages was built, he asked that question when he was first involved in this, and no one seems to know. Pam said it was not on the 1860 map. It is on the 1888 one.

Patrick then read a letter from the Heritage Commission Demolition Review Committee. In the letter it stated that it is the opinion of the DRC that the garage is not historically or culturally important to the Town of Exeter. Voting in favor were John Merkle, John Gruether, Pam Gjettum and Julie Gilman.

Patrick then opened it up to the commission members to see if they had any questions or comments for Mr. Hill. Doug asked if they were going to make the garage door wider. Robert said it will be the same width, but it will be moved over eighteen inches. The two sides will be made a little wider. Patrick said there are some other options for garage doors that would give you the wood look to the exterior.

Julie said she really appreciates their efforts to just keep it what it is. A two foot extension is not going to compromise what it is right now. She appreciates them not making a big change.

Patrick said he feels they have enough information to accept the application. Pam made a motion to accept the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application accepted. Patrick then asked if there were any comments or questions before he asks for a motion for approval. There were none and Pam made a motion to approve the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application was approved.

Next on the agenda is the application of Barbara Shaw for changes to the existing structure located at 163 Water Street, Unit A4 for window replacement. Case #21-8. Barbara Shaw spoke and said that she is also a member of the condo association. Her unit faces the back of the building and would like to install new windows. She said this will also set the standard for all of the other windows at the back of the building, which includes nine. She said around five years ago, they applied for and the condo association paid for all the front windows. This application is for the back windows and the respective owners are paying for their own because they are at the back. The condo association will be responsible for the ones in the common area.

Patrick asked Barbara if she knew the application number for the front elevation. She said it was at least five years ago and it was before her time. Barbara said she does not know much about windows, so she went to one of the most reputable glass suppliers in Exeter, Portland Glass. She said the old style is obsolete and Portland Glass came up with something similar and as close as possible to what is there now. There were two representatives present from Portland Glass, Dana and Chris. Before they spoke, Patrick asked Barbara if she was able to download the guidelines of the HDC. The reps said that is what they based their proposal on.

Dana handed out an additional packet to add to what the commission already had. He said they are looking for approval to replace existing wood windows as requested on the application with a vinyl window option. Options that are available today can be painted with a high bond and heat resistant paint. You can obtain the same styles and features as the historic look, while also giving you the opportunity to have a window last a lot longer with little or no maintenance. The window they are proposing to install is a Harvey Classic Vinyl. It will be a replacement double hung. He had a sample and it is new construction. In the packet on page 2, there is a picture of what the replacement window will look like. Some of the features of this window are, premium vinyl that is strong, resistant to insects and corrosion and a lot more effective at controlling noise. They will have insulated glass units vs. just the standard single panel. These windows will never need to be painted. They can be repainted if desired. They come with heavy duty hardware and a lifetime warranty.

Patrick asked if they had a picture of the building elevation with the windows and they did not have any with them.

Pam asked how many windows they were talking about. Dana said in this unit, six windows to start and there are nine. There are the common area windows that the association would be responsible for and they are looking to set the standard for the remainder of the building for the rest of the residents. Barbara said if and when they want to change them. Barbara would like to have this done before winter.

Patrick asked if this was the only option looked at in regards to a window product. Barbara said they have looked at a lot but she does not think they can come up with something that they are absolutely confident that it will have the in kind appearance. She then asked Chris from Portland Glass to speak. He said the color obviously is the first one. The second one is the style of the window. They brought a sample and Dana said it is black, but the finish they would be using is the dark bronze and he then passed around a sample of the color to the commission members.

Patrick asked what the existing trim is around the windows now and Barbara said it is dark bronze like the sample. Chris stated that it is a flat casing and has a little rib on the outside of it but they would not be replacing this. They would be replacing the window.

Patrick said color is easy to match. The thicknesses of the styles matching day light opening is really difficult. He then asked what the width of these windows were. Dana said they are 39 x84. Patrick said anything over a 30 inch window with vinyl alone will not be able to support that. The checkrails at the center, the meeting rails at the center typically begin to sag. This is where they have found in the past that vinyl is not been historically great for large openings because of this. Patrick asked if Dana had a corner sample and he does not. They only brought the one tonight. He can certainly get one and Patrick said he thinks that would be helpful so the commission can understand the thicknesses. He knows the differences between the inserts and the construction of the windows and an eastern frame vs western frame. Patrick said he thinks a cross section would help the commission understand better. If they have one that is a mock insert into a historic frame example would be good. Patrick then showed everyone a mock frame he had.

Patrick said it would be good for them to bring back an elevation that shows exactly which six windows and a total shot of the building because you are talking about setting a precedence with this approval. If we are doing these six windows, we want to know the impact of what is going to be on the whole elevation as well.

Pam asked Barbara if she ever considered redoing the wooden ones. Barbara said this was definitely their starting point. Patrick then asked if they considered replacing the glass and Dana said yes, but he thinks the point was to upgrade the efficiency of the building. Patrick said there are other options for window replacements too if the wood sashes are in good shape and have been protected by storms on the exterior. Barbara said the wood is starting to rot and Dana said there are several sashes in there that are severely rotted. Barbara said she would like to replace the whole thing if possible.

Patrick asked if the existing windows are chain and pulley or rope and pulley in the pockets. Dana said they are rope with existing open pockets. There are ways of insulating these too. Historically there are ways to do that. There are definitely options for historical repair that should be explored and maybe come back after exploring some of those options.

Barbara asked if the commission had any recommendations of who would do this. Julie said she had a couple of different refurbishment and restoration of companies that she can send to Barbara. Barbara said this is what she sort of explored and she thought it would be totally out of range for them.

Barbara asked if most of the time the commission sees a lot of the buildings doing refurbishment and restoration instead of putting in new windows. Patrick said to be honest, they do not. Barbara asked if the commission has any recommended suppliers. Patrick said they are not allowed to give out supplier

information in terms of showing preference, but he can give her materials and she can just type them in. Fiberglass and composite windows, aluminum windows and wood windows are the top three.

Barbara asked Dana if they could explore other options and he said absolutely they can.

Pam showed Barbara the page that she wants from the HDC Guidelines. She can look it up on the town website.

Patrick said that he would make a recommendation to come back with more information to complete the application for the commission. Have a clear picture of exactly which windows are being replaced in this application and as this setting precedence, total impact for the whole project.

Barbara said her concern is that there are some safety concerns right now and they are trying to see if they can have something in before the winter. Patrick asked what the safety concern was. Barbara said there was one of them that just sort of fell off and she taped it back. It was not falling out to the exterior. Barbara said they will go back to the drawing board. She then asked if it would be ok if they came back with different material which would be aluminum clad. Patrick said that aluminum clad is something the commission has entertained before as one of the options.

Pam said the commission is not going to make Barbara wait for another month to approve her application. She said they will come out and meet specially. Dana will have another example to bring when they meet again. Barbara wanted to know when they could meet again and Patrick told her that he cannot speak for the whole board because he does not know what their availability is. These meetings are typically on the 3rd Thursday of each month. He said they would collectively have to find a date that works.

Patrick said what they should bring back with them is a detailed cut sheet of the product suggested. A corner sample so the commission can see the frame and stuff like that in a historic corner. If you have the dimensions of what the existing is now so it can be compared to what was presented. Also, a full elevation of the building so they know which windows.

Julie then made a motion to table the application until a date can be determined. Pam seconded. All were in favor and application tabled.

Barbara will contact Barbara in the Building Department by email and Patrick will email her as well to tell her what has happened in this meeting and to be prepared for you to be in contact when you have new information. This is when we will start looking for a new date because we do not want to rush to find a date and have you not ready. Patrick said they have to give the public an opportunity to show up. They will try and meet before next month's scheduled meeting. Barbara said she will be out of town next week so maybe the middle of October.

Other Business: Approval of April 15th and May 20th meeting minutes. Julie said because it has been so long, they are automatically approved.

Next is the election of officers. Julie said she cannot be an officer. Patrick said the officers they have are: Chairman, Vice-Chair and Clerk. Julie moved to appoint Patrick Gordon as Chairman of the HDC. Doug seconded. All were in favor and Patrick appointed again to Chairman. Patrick made a motion to nominate Pam to continue as Clerk. Julie seconded. All were in favor and Pam nominated again to Clerk.

Julie then talked about the CLG Grant. She said everyone was sent an email from the Historic Resources about their next grant round. There is going to be some kind of change, but she does not know what that is. For right now, because it is budget season and we have not met, she had to give a number to the Town Planner for what we might include in the grant budget. This depends on what they want to do. She said she threw a couple of ideas at him for the sake of having a number to explain to the Select Board. One was to carry on with what the Heritage Commission has done, which would be another area survey in a different part of town. The other option was something that she thought of because she feels like people are scared to join the HDC and HC because they don't know what they don't know. The guidelines are good training material but there is also a pamphlet that the NH Preservation Alliance put out that had a picture of a house and it told you what style it was. She said her concept is to create something for the different periods of time that are represented in Exeter and have examples from Exeter. Patrick likes that idea. Pam said they have this up at the Historical Society. Jody Prep has given that architectural program at least twice and she has all the pictures and we have copies of them too. She said some clever person could take those slides and update them. Julie said that was the idea and this one would be for matching funds. The Town Planner is able to use our time and his time as in kind matches. We have \$1,000 in that line item and she has no idea how much this would cost. She thinks this would be a good teaching tool and make people more comfortable.

With no further business, Pam made a motion to adjourn. Julie seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick

Recording Secretary